

THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN

PRODUCED BY THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN FEDERATION



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The National Fantasy Fan, Vol. 9, No. 4: The Official Organ of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). This issue was completed Dec. 1, 2009. The editor was Heath Row. The editor for the next issue is Heath Row, 438 N. Stanley Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036; kalel@well.com. Please send your submissions and questions to that person or the editorial cabal bureau head or advisor. All opinions herein are those of the writers and do not reflect the opinions of the staff or other members of the N3F except where so noted. Submission deadline for the next issue is Feb. 15, 2010. This zine is to be published quarterly in March, June, September, and December through volunteer effort. All material in this issue was contributed for one-time use only, and the copyright is retained by the contributor. Reproduction in any media of any portion of this publication is prohibited without official permission of the current president and directorate or the individual contributor.

Letter from the Chairman

I am writing this on behalf of the president, who has gotten away from it all. The new year is coming, and we'll soon have an active president again.

I particularly want to thank Heath Row, editor of the clubzine. He is doing a great job. I am sure that Heath would love to get some letters of comment about anything you want to write about, so please send him an LOC!

David Speakman and I are responsible for our group on Facebook, and I am happy to welcome several new members who found us through Facebook. Other members online can help spread the word. If you have friends who like fantasy and science fiction, invite them to join our Facebook group. The National Fantasy Fan Federation's 70th anniversary is approaching!

I will write more about changes to the N3F's Web presence as they are implemented. We'll also email members; if your address isn't on file with the secretary—me—send it to me.

We currently have several bureaus without volunteer leaders. Open positions include computer gaming, convention coordinator, and teaching science fiction.

For the computer gaming bureau, one needs a good knowledge of computer games. It'd be good to include console and handheld games as well as PC gaming. The convention coordinator needs to keep up to date with convention news, attend conventions, and help Neffers meet each other at cons. The teaching science fiction bureau coordinates with teachers and educators. The bureau head needs to provide lesson plans and advice.

Anyone who is interested in one of the open bureaus should consider volunteering. Taking over a bureau is simple. Just email me to learn more.

Finally, if you have any ideas or thoughts on how we can improve the N3F—or if you have any comments—feel free to email me or write me a letter.

—Dennis Davis

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The National Fantasy Fan Submission Guidelines

This is the official clubzine for the N3F, a combination of the old *Fan* (the official reports) and *Tightbeam's* reviews, con reports, poetry, and fiction. Art—covers and illustrations—is always needed. *The Fan* is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December. Deadlines are the 15th day of the month before the publication month (e.g. May 15 for the June issue). When submitting, paper copies are fine, but electronic formats

are preferred. Paper submissions won't be returned without an SASE. Submissions can be made to the editorial cabal chief (the current president), the current editor, or the advisor; query first. Send art to the art editor; send reviews to the reviews editor. Please send only copies of your work, not originals. If you've never submitted an article to a zine and aren't totally comfortable with writing, please consider writing a letter of comment. All submissions will be edited.

Tightbeam: Letters of Comment

The September 2009 N3F zine was the best I've seen in a while. It's just what I like in a zine: some history of early sf fandom and early sf fans; con reports; reviews of books, zines, TV shows, films, etc.; club reports; letters of comment; and other stuff. A great variety! My favorite was "The God Monologues." That story could have also been in *Friends Journal*. I hope the next issues are similar to this last one. Keep up the good work.

Neffers can check out my Web site by searching for "Dotty's Dimensions" with Google. If you want any of the publications in the headers, just email me what issues you want, and I'll send them by email attachment to you.

—Dotty Kurtz

I downloaded *The National Fantasy Fan*, Vol. 9, Nos. 1-2. There are some very familiar names in the officers' slate. It reminds me of the old *Star Trek* Welcommittee, of which Yvonne and I were members for 15 years. With the change in rule about non-member contributors to the clubzine, I will be happy to send a letter of comment for each issue that arrives in my in box or on eFanzines.com. The more access to fandom as a whole members have, the more they'll be able to see the length and breadth of it.

At this year's World Science Fiction Convention in Montréal, Charles Brown of *Locus Magazine* was remembered, as was Forrest J Ackerman. We are losing so many big names, simply from age. Many fanzine fans were in evidence, and the fanzine lounge was often full. We had a great time; we attended the Aurora Awards banquet (I was a nominee but did not win), and we had the privilege of handing out a Hugo Award. Most memorable.

The 1948 Fantasy Annual looks great, and there are so many zines out there that we tell people they should read without looking to see if the zines are available to be read. Is there a PDF version of this fabled zine? Is there anyone who could take this kind of job on? I'd like to see it. It would be a glimpse into a fandom we've only been told about.

My PDA contains quite a number of e-books and short stories, and I have read them all. I have looked at the eReader and the Kindle, and it would make traveling with lots of books much easier. However, for my old sensitivities, there's nothing like the search through a bookstore, looking for something special and long buried, and the scent of old paper and mold that says to me that it's old and treasured. I will always prefer a real book to an eReader, but nothing says I can't have both.

I got to meet Forry Ackerman a few times as early as 1983, usually at Worldcon, where Yvonne and I kept bumping into Forry and Wendayne as often as twice a day, and again in 2001 or 2002 when he was the fan guest of honor at Con*cept, the annual convention in Montréal. He was always pleasant and helpful, especially to younger and less experienced fans, and he serves as the best example of what to do with new people and fans you've never met. May we all endeavor to treat others with the same dignity Forry offered us.

In terms of social media, I am on Facebook and use LiveJournal as an archive for my letters. That's what I'll do with this letter once I've sent it to you. (I'll publish it before you do!) I know Twitter is popular, but I'm putting enough time into social media as it is. One criticism of Twitter that I've read is that it's perfect for the already foreshortened attention span of the average human being. When will 140 characters be too many? Not long from now, I fear.

While I'm not sure if I've read most of Philip K. Dick's work, even after all these years, his work is still being turned into movies on a regular basis. That says to me that the ideas behind his books are still modern and viable. I need to get my list of Dick books and see what I'm missing. Dick almost became a Canadian citizen years ago when he was a guest at a Vancouver convention and stayed a while.

Most of the zines I get are not about sf, but about sf *fandom*, which is also quite informative about the state of sf. The former can tell you about the writers, but the latter can tell you about the readers and what goes through their minds. We all know how interesting the history of fandom can be, and how it has formed what we do today.

I look forward to future issues.

—Lloyd Penney

Many thanks for Vol. 9, No. 3, of *The Fan*, the September issue.

The N3F needs to get out there to tell people they are there. Social media makes it that much easier to contact new people and stay in touch with members. Maybe a Flickr page with members' pictures? You're scattered all over, so a rogues' gallery like that could help.

I'm glad Jon Swartz is giving club members a look at their own history. That's what gives fandom an added dimension for me: a look at how far back fandom goes, and why we do what we do. Jack Robins shows how he got started; sounds like he was there at the beginning.

There's a lot of controversy over the new *Star Trek* movie. I saw it. It's good to see another *Trek* movie, but I'm not exactly pleased with the "re-imagining" of the franchise. I guess that's how Paramount was able to get fresh milk out of a 40+-year-old cash cow. I wish they'd stayed with the original timeline, but then, *Enterprise* fiddled with it and even contradicted it without explanation.

Tanya Huff is an old friend of mine, and we used to go to the same conventions in Toronto. I'm glad that she's been successful in her writing career, but as with many friends who have become published authors, the career and continuous self-marketing takes them away from fannish fun—and their old friends. Selfish on my part, perhaps, but she is missed.

Our next convention is in a couple of weeks: Astronomicon 2009 in Rochester, New York. If you need any information to list Ad Astra 2010, our own local sf convention, or any other Toronto convention, for that matter, let me know, and I will send it.

—Lloyd Penney

Historical Vignette: *Postwarp*, 1949-1954

By Jon D. Swartz

Before *Tightbeam*, there was *Postwarp*, the first official N3F letterzine, known to club members of the time by the nickname “Postie.”

Postwarp began in 1949, edited and published by Arthur H. Rapp. Later club president, Rapp turned his editing duties over to Alan J. Lewis, who was replaced by Bob Johnson. Johnson was succeeded by Doug Fisher—who, according to one letter writer, let *Postwarp* die.

Of particular interest to me were the club members who had the time and inclination to write long letters of comment for the zine.

An issue dated July 6, 1950, included letters from S. M. Carr, E. H. Appelman, Janie Lamb, Alan M. Grant, Shelby Vick, Derek Pickles, and Roger N. Dard. A later issue also dated in July 1950 only featured letters from Dard, A. Edward Cooper, and Chas. Heisner—but they were *long* missives. There was also an anonymous letter with negative comments about members.

People such as Rick Sneary, Bill Berger, Grant, Ev Winne, McCain, Vick, George Andrews, and Lamb wrote letters for Vol. 1, No. 3, dated Aug. 18, 1950. *Postwarp* had 40 subscribers, and it sold for 10 cents an issue (or six for 50 cents). Neil Wood, Eva Firestone, Vick, Winne, Paul Rehorst, Andrews, and Berger contributed to Vol. 1, No. 5.

All four of these “monthly” issues were edited by Bob Johnson of Greeley, Colorado—with the assistance of Ella Lee. Johnson’s issues ranged from four to six legal-sized (8.5 by 14 inches) pages. A subscription wasn’t included in the annual club dues, even though *Postwarp* was sponsored by the club—and only members could subscribe. Johnson stated in each issue that he reserved “the right to delete any extraneous material, or any language which I deem unfitting.” In late 1950, this initial version of *Postwarp* ceased to be.

The letterzine was revived in September 1951, now nicknamed “Posie”—sometimes spelled “Posy”—and selling for 15 cents. The editor stated that it was no longer sponsored by the National Fantasy Fan Federation and

that each issue would also contain book, movie, and fanzine reviews, as well as ads.

Nevertheless, many of the same people contributed materials, and almost all of the letters addressed club concerns, including a letter from then president Rick Sneary, who wrote about current fanzines, awards, upcoming club elections, and the direction in which the club was heading. I’m not certain how successful this

version of the zine was, because the next issue was dated three years later.

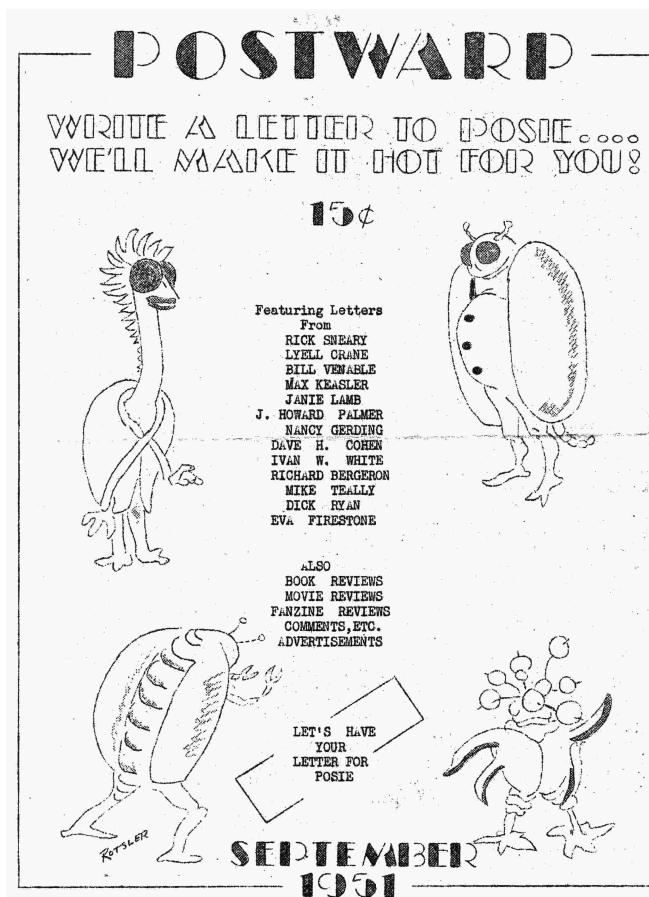
In May 1954, *Postwarp* was mailed with *The National Fantasy Fan*—stapled to it, in fact. Contributors included Capt. Kenneth F. Slater, Jim White, Sam Johnson, Stan Woolston, Tom Walsh, Dottie Hansen, Emili Thompson, Russel Brown, Richard E. Geis, W. Paul Nowell, and M. McNeil. Stuart S. Hoffman served as mailer, and John Magnus edited both zines.

Topics addressed in the letterzine included L. Ron Hubbard’s *Dianetics*, Donald Keyhoe’s *The Flying Saucers Are Real*, Frank Scully’s *Behind the Flying Saucers*, earthquake and volcano activity, reports of the ocean floor rising, Norwescon and other cons, club challenges (Why do we call it “national” when it’s “international”?), the election of a Miss STF, and fan-based communication—or the lack thereof.

One communication method tried at the time was the exchange of wire

recordings through the mail. A few members liked this new method of communication, but most didn’t, citing several problems (recordings got lost in the mail). Other gripes common to zines of the time were also expressed: issues weren’t long enough or didn’t appear on time, editors didn’t date a particular issue or include his return address, etc.

Tightbeam, like *Postwarp*, started as a separate publication and then became part of *The Fan*, as it has been since 2001, when then editor Janine Stinson combined the two zines. Because of the use of computers. *The Fan* is now easier to read, has better artwork, and is much more attractive. That said, members today seem reluctant to write long letters of comment, either for print or online. I suspect emails to fellow members have fulfilled that need somewhat.



From the collection of Jon D. Swartz

Member Spotlight: Janine Stinson

By Jon D. Swartz and Heath Row

Longtime National Fantasy Fan Federation member Janine Stinson was the first winner of the club's Neffy Award as outstanding fan of the year in 2005—almost a decade after she joined. Currently a Florida resident, Stinson is a former editor of *Tightbeam* and *The National Fantasy Fan* in the early 2000s, and she has won the club's President's (Franson) Award in 2003 and the club's Kaymar Award in 2000. Additionally, she served as N3F president in 2007. She is credited with combining *Tightbeam* and *The National Fantasy Fan* with the May 17, 2001, issue (at the time numbered Vol. 1, No. 1).

Despite that laudable recent activity and involvement in the N3F, Stinson was a relative latecomer to organized fandom. An avid sf reader—she “lost her mind to science fiction” in junior high school—Stinson didn't learn about fandom until she was in college in the late 1970s and read about some of Harlan Ellison's run-ins with fans. She didn't actually get involved in fandom until she joined the N3F 20 years later.

The Fan connected with Stinson via email to explore her involvement in sf fandom, the N3F, and fanzine publishing. Our conversation touched on the future of zinemaking, the importance of member involvement, and her favorite authors.

The National Fantasy Fan: When did you join the National Fantasy Fan Federation?

Janine Stinson: 1996, I think.

The Fan: How did you learn about the club?

Stinson: A magazine classified ad. Might have been *Locus*. I didn't have anyone to talk to about science fiction, fantasy, and horror, and the N3F looked like a group where I could find others who were interested in it.

The Fan: How has the club—and fandom—changed?

Stinson: It's gotten older. There's also been a shift from print to online for communication paths, which I think was a positive move given that personal computers became so popular and their technology has advanced so much.

The Fan: What role do you think older fans play?

Stinson: Older fen can provide historical context for

contemporary fannish activities that goes beyond a fannish dictionary. Any gap that exists between older and younger fen is, in my opinion, mostly instinctual, whatever the reason (and whether the effort is conscious or not). The human trait of patterning—making sense of new information by trying to fit it into a previously recognized pattern or group—probably causes such things to happen, but if people were more aware of this, they might perpetuate it less where social groups are concerned.

The Fan: You edited *Tightbeam* and *The Fan* about a decade ago. How many issues did you edit?

Stinson: Holy printer jam! I volunteered to edit *Tightbeam* about a year after becoming a Neffer and edited it for two or three years, maybe longer. That's around 12-18 issues, since *Tightbeam* came out every other month. I played a part in the consolidation of *Tightbeam* and *The National Fantasy Fan* (aka *The Fan*) in 2001 when the club treasury got so low that the directorate, president, and other club officers had to face discontinuing either—or both—clubzines. I didn't want to see either of them go and thought combining them would be a better solution. I'm glad the officers agreed.

The Fan: Why did you restart the zine's numbering?

Stinson: It made sense to me at the time that the numbering change because *The Fan* would be now a meld of two zines—and there were no plans in place to separate them again within a year or two. If there had been such plans, I might have kept the numberings already in use.

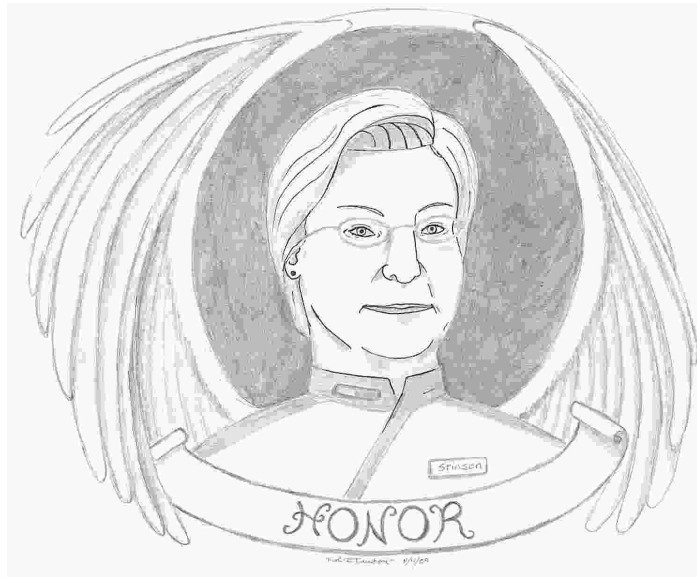
I realize there are collectors and completists out there who loathe my choice, but it's water under the bridge—unless someone's finally built a working time machine.

The Fan: As one editor to another, what's one thing you wish the clubzine would do?

Stinson: Get more member input in the form of articles, reviews, and art. There are Neffers who don't feel they have talents in any of those areas, but perhaps there's something else they'd like to share.

The Fan isn't a critzine, it's a members fanzine. Editors can't beat material out of potential contributors, but they can encourage Neffers to send in letters of comment; I turned more than one LOC into an article for *The Fan*.

The Fan: What do you think the future will bring the fanzine—and how fans communicate?



Ruth R. Davidson

Stinson: I like to think that fanzines will continue as online publications even if paper fanzines fade away due to cost constraints. One of the reasons I offered to co-edit *Steam Engine Time* with Bruce Gillespie in Australia was that I didn't want to see such a good fanzine that also talked seriously about sf go by the wayside. I also thought that *SET* would get more varied readers if it had at least an online edition, if not going completely online only. Fortunately, I talked Bruce into this, and I'm still co-editing.

The Fan: Tell me about *Steam Engine Time*.

Stinson: The first three issues from April 2000 to December 2001 were co-edited by Bruce Gillespie, Paul Kincaid, and Maureen Kincaid Speller. They established *SET* as a fanzine whose readers and contributors—not to mention the editors—still read sf and still wanted to talk about it in print. Considering the prevalence of fannish activity-oriented fanzines, that was a brave stance.

Sometime in 2004, I emailed Bruce to ask if *SET* was going to continue publishing with its initial editors. He contacted Paul and Maureen, both of whom declined, as they had other commitments already. I asked Bruce if he'd be willing to let me co-edit a revived *SET*, with the same layout, design, and editorial stance, and he agreed. Our first co-edited ish, Issue 5, was dated January 2005.

The Fan: How do you and Bruce collaborate on the zine?

Stinson: Entirely online. We swap between doing the layout and editing the lettercol, and editing the articles and choosing artwork. We discuss the cover choices and whether we have sufficient material to publish a themed issue. We disagree sometimes, but politely, and I've enjoyed the experience (despite several personal and medical problems) quite a lot. We try to publish *SET* three times a year. In fact, I should be working on that right now.

The Fan: You've also published the zine *Peregrine Nations*. How was that different than *The Fan* and *SET*?

Stinson: *Peregrine Nations*'s first issue was dated April 2001; its final ish was dated January 2008. In most years, I managed to keep it quarterly.

Its theme was "journeys" and the title was a play on "peregrination." Inner as well as outer journeys were considered, and I got some really good articles from many people. Got a lot of excellent art, as well.

The Fan: Why did you stop publishing *Peregrine Nations*?

Stinson: When I announced on a fanzine mailing list that I was considering starting my own fanzine, I was well advised: "When it stops being fun, then stop doing it." More than one person suggested this, so I don't recall the first person to recommend it. *PN* ceased publication because it became a chore instead of a joy. Personal problems also contributed to that end, but never say never—*PN* might return, some day. I'm still juggling priorities!

The Fan: In 2004, you contributed to the Wildside Press book *The Cherryh Odyssey*. How did you get involved?

Stinson: I found a call for papers somewhere online a year or so previous, and I'd had an article published in the

online magazine *Strange Horizons* on certain characters in selected Cherryh novels. So I sent Ed Carmien, editor of *The Cherryh Odyssey*, a copy of that article and a cover letter in which I offered to expand and revise the article for submission to the book. He sent back comments and requests for changes. I made most of them and ended up copy editing the book. It's not a national bestseller by any means, but I'm very pleased to be included in it.

The Fan: What was your essay about?

Stinson: I think the title pretty much says it: "The Human as Other in the Science Fiction Novels of C.J. Cherryh." In sf's early years, when aliens were in a story or novel, they were often cardboard-like characters with just a few human traits to give readers something to relate to. In the late 1950s, writers began to explore the concept of *human* as other: a character that leaves behind the known and moves toward the unknown, to better understand it and often because it's more like "home" than the character's home culture. Those characters represent the Other, the Outsider, the one unknown who arrives at the tribe's camp looking and sounding like something almost-human. Some of those characters never make the transition from human to Other culture, but many of Cherryh's human characters have done so. My article was about all that, and about selected Cherryh characters and novels in which I felt this was best exemplified.

The Fan: Who are your favorite authors? Books?

Stinson: From the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, I read little besides Harlan Ellison and C.J. Cherryh in the sf field. I'm a fan of *Dune*, Gormenghast, Lord of the Rings, and Bruce Sterling's work. Current favorites include Elizabeth Bear, Octavia E. Butler, William Eakin, Stephen King, Joe R. Lansdale, Lyn McConchie, Suzy McKee Charnas, Melissa Scott, Peter Watts, and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro.

There are many more authors whose novels I've recently discovered via research for an urban fantasy article. Of those, the best are Kelley Armstrong's Women of the Otherworld series and *Sunshine* by Robin McKinley, which I just finished reading. Armstrong has expanded the meaning of "series" by writing from different viewpoints among a group of characters in her world, where other writers create a series character whose viewpoint is the only one in the series. I find this eminently refreshing.

McKinley's book was a recent recommendation; it takes the vampire mythos and does with it what Emma Bull did with contemporary fantasy in *War for the Oaks*, which is considered by many to be one of the foundation texts for urban fantasy as we know it today. The idea of legends among us fascinates me.

The Fan: What interests you about the idea?

Stinson: The gee-whiz feeling of, "Wow, wouldn't it be cool if you *could* turn into a werewolf?" Or "Whoa, my best friend is a gargoyle? Cool!" Sensawunda.

The writers dealing most often with this kind of fiction have been working to expand and give depth to the myths and legends humans have carried through the centuries.

Imagining Arizona

By R-Laurraine Tutihasi

When I volunteered to write this article, I didn't realize how many science fiction, fantasy, and horror authors live in Arizona. Many of the writers weren't born or raised here but moved here as adults.

I knew of a few before I started. **Jacqueline Lichtenberg**, a fellow member of the N3F, has been known to me for many years. I was introduced to her novel *House of Zeor* by a friend a long time ago. I liked the book and went on to acquire and read all the other books in the Sime~Gen series. For those of you not familiar with the series, Lichtenberg invented a future Earth where the human race has diverged into two sub-species. She has written in other universes, as well, and I've read a few of those works. She lived for many years in New York and moved to the Phoenix area just a few years ago after she retired from her job as a chemist. Her writing career began writing fan fiction in a variation of the *Star Trek* universe.

I also knew that **Alan Dean Foster** lived in Arizona. He's probably the most famous of the Arizona authors. I haven't personally read that much by him outside of his *Star Trek* novelizations, but he has an impressive bibliography. He is perhaps best known for his science fiction novels set in the Humanx Commonwealth, an interstellar ethical and political union of species including humankind and the insectoid Thranx. Many of those novels feature Philip Lynx, or Flinx, an empathic young man who finds himself involved in events that threaten the survival of the galaxy. Foster has also written fantasy. He was born in New York City, grew up in Los Angeles, and loves to travel. He currently lives in Prescott.

While I knew about **Diana Gabaldon**, mostly because she was a guest at a convention I attended, I have not read any of her work. Her books are difficult to classify by genre because they contain elements of romantic fiction, historical fiction, and science fiction (in the form of time travel). She is one of the native Arizonans.

Emma Bull and **Will Shetterly** were also known to me. I met them years ago when they lived in Minnesota, but I hadn't realized they were now in Arizona. Bull writes science fiction and fantasy. Her best-known novel is *War for the Oaks*, one of the pioneering works of urban fantasy. Shetterly, then, is Bull's husband and sometime co-author.

He writes American fantasy and comic books and is best known for his 1997 novel *Dogland*.

I originally met **Adam Niswander** in an entirely different context. He writes in many genres: science fiction, fantasy, horror, mystery, thriller, and young adult. He lives in Phoenix. I regret to say that I haven't read anything by him. He was born in New York and grew up in Florida.

I have a couple of **Jennifer Roberson's** books and have heard her doing readings at conventions. She is primarily a writer of fantasy, but she has also written historical novels (which are the ones I have). Roberson was born in Missouri and moved to Arizona as a child. She lives in Flagstaff.

Michael A. Stackpole is another Arizona author. I know I've read his writing, though I think it's all been shorter works. He writes science fiction and has also done a lot of writing in the gaming area. Stackpole was born in Wisconsin and grew up in Vermont. He currently resides in Scottsdale.

While I have one of **Dennis L. McKiernan's** books, I haven't read it. From his bibliography, it appears he is strictly a fantasy author. McKiernan was born in Missouri and lives in Tucson.

I've also heard of **Melanie Rawn**. She is also a fantasy author. The titles she has written sound like the sort of literature I seek.

The name of **Judith Tarr** is also vaguely familiar to me. I am not at all surprised that she also writes fantasy. She lives in Vail and raises horses.

The last name that sounds familiar to me is **John Vornholt**. He apparently also writes as **Caroline Goode**. His name is familiar is because he's written some *Star Trek* novels. My husband buys and reads *Star Trek* novels voraciously. I catalog all of our book acquisitions.

There are also some Arizona-based authors whose names and work are not familiar to me. They include Dana Davis, Russell Davis (aka David Cian), Shannon Denton, Doranna Durgin, Jeff Mariotte, Stephenie Meyer, Joe Nassise, Janeen O'Kerry, James A. Owen, Janni Lee Simner, and Michelle M. Welch.

Dana Davis is an author of fantasy.

Russell Davis writes science fiction and westerns, as well as other genres. He also writes as **David Cian** and **Cliff Ryder**.

Shannon Denton is an artist and writer who has worked in TV and comics.

Doranna Durgin and **Jeff Mariotte** are fantasy writers. Mariotte was born in Illinois but has lived in many places because of his father's work for the government.



Sarah E. Harder

Stephenie Meyer has written fantasies and science fiction and is best known for the *Twilight* series, which has recently inspired a couple of movies. She was born in Connecticut and grew up in Phoenix.

Horror fiction is the bailiwick of **Joe Nassise**. He is originally from Boston.

Janeen O'Kerry writes of time travel romances. Her real name is **Janeen Deboard**.

James A. Owen's is perhaps best known for the comic book *Starchild*, the novel *Mythworld*, and his stint editing the science fiction magazine *Argosy*. He works in a 14,000-

square-foot, century-old church in northeastern Arizona.

Janni Lee Simner writes fantasies for children and young adults. A native New Yorker, she now resides in Tucson.

Michelle M. Welch is a Tucson native who has absconded to Phoenix. She works as a librarian and writes fantasies on the side. She is fond of cats and is an amateur musician.

Finally, I also found a couple of other authors of minor note. One is self-published, and the other has published one book. Who lives and writes in *your* home state?

Pen Pals, Young Fen Pals

By Sarah E. Harder

During a recent visit to my sister's house, I discovered that her 6-year-old daughter is pen pals with another one of my sisters. That realization brought back a flood of memories. I, too, had a pen pal as a child: my aunt Peggy. She lived in California at the time, as did most of my extended family. My family moved around quite a bit, and we ended up in Florida for a good chunk of my childhood. So there we were: family on opposite sides of the country. Because of that, I always felt the distance between family not just in miles, but in my heart as well. I've always wished we were closer in terms of proximity and in personal relationship. Even as a child, I wished for it. Perhaps God heard that wish, because I was given a lifeline—a long-distance connection—to one very special aunt. She was my great-aunt actually, but she was the second youngest of seven siblings and therefore much younger than my grandmother, her sister.

I can't recall the details of how it started. One of us wrote a note to the other one. The other responded. It went on from there. It was wonderful! I felt connected to my aunt, who was so far away from me physically. We traded stickers in almost every letter. That made it even more fun because I collected stickers then—and I still do! This pen pal-ship went on for several years. It wasn't long after my family moved back to California when I was 14 that Aunt Peggy moved north to Washington. It seemed that we'd never be close! But we had the memories of those letters. We still email on occasion.

Why am I writing about this? What does it have to do with science fiction and fantasy, much less fandom? I'll answer the second question first. Nothing. Or everything! It depends on what you choose to converse about, doesn't it? If you wrote to a child, you could talk about age-appropriate sf stories or young adult novels, couldn't you? You could help a child develop an interest in the genre and its fandom. My aunt and I didn't talk about science fiction or fantasy, but sometimes, we traded unicorn stickers. Of course, if you gained your pen pal through an sf club, then you could naturally discuss sf and fantasy.

As for the first question: Why am I writing about this? There are a few aspects. One is that writing to a child is a gift you can give. Children love mail. It's exciting. It's very "adult" to receive mail. It makes children feel grown up. It

makes them feel valued. Plus, it gives children a chance to practice their writing and penmanship in a real-world way, not just for school assignments. That is partly why I believe that writing actual letters as a pen pal is important. Email (and practicing typing) can come later as they approach their teen or preteen years. Letter writing also teaches children the importance of etiquette and manners—as they learn to write thank-you notes, for example, for any gift you might choose to send along with your correspondence.

Another way that being a pen pal to a child is a gift is that it forms a bond or connection with them. That is especially important if you live far away from each other. As in the case of me and my aunt, it can help a child feel connected to family members that they cannot or do not see on a regular basis. Phone calls are a nice addition—and even essential—depending on your relationship, but you can't hold a phone call in your hands. You can, however, hold and reread a nicely thought out letter.

Remember that there are certain social rules and expectations regarding this subject. Generally speaking, it's completely appropriate to write to a niece, nephew, god child, or your own child. Even the child of a close friend might be appropriate depending on your relationship with the family (such as whether you're an honorary aunt or uncle). It is *not* appropriate, however, to write to children to whom you are not related and with whose family you have no close bond. You don't want to frighten parents or make them think that you have ill intentions toward their child. Pen pal-ships to children through sf and fantasy clubs might be appropriate depending on the age of the child, the rules of the club, and whether the child has parental permission. When in doubt, ask the parents for permission before you begin writing to their child.

I started to write to pen pals through sf and fantasy clubs at about the age of 11. On occasion, and especially in the beginning, I would share the letters with my mother. It helped her feel and know that everything was OK and appropriate. It helped me feel the same because I trusted her judgment. I didn't have the mental maturity to think about it in comprehensive terms, but intuitively, I knew there was potential for ill—and that if mom said it was OK, then it was. I never had an appropriateness issue with a pen pal. I had several pen pals, and they were all great. It was so exciting to come home from school to receive mail. Again, I felt very grown up to have my own sf pen pals! It

wasn't until I got older, that I considered that those adults might have been writing to me out of kindness. Even so, what a gift! What great memories and discussions. They helped me ease confidently into the world of fandom. They helped me discover new authors and gave me new perspectives I hadn't considered before. They treated me with respect. I never felt treated like a little kid even though I'm sure it would have been easy to treat me that way.

Two very special pen pals started writing to me when I was 11 or 12 and witnessed me, through the letters, growing up. I was thrilled to be able to send them my high school graduation announcements. They stuck with me a long time, and I always loved them for that. Our pen pal-ships stopped at differing times. One got married, and it wouldn't do to have a married man writing to a young woman barely out of high school. The other had health concerns that prevented her from continuing, although I still sent her the occasional card for a few years afterward. Both of those people, whom I have never met, have a special place in my heart. They were a part of my childhood, my youth, my blossoming into a grownup!

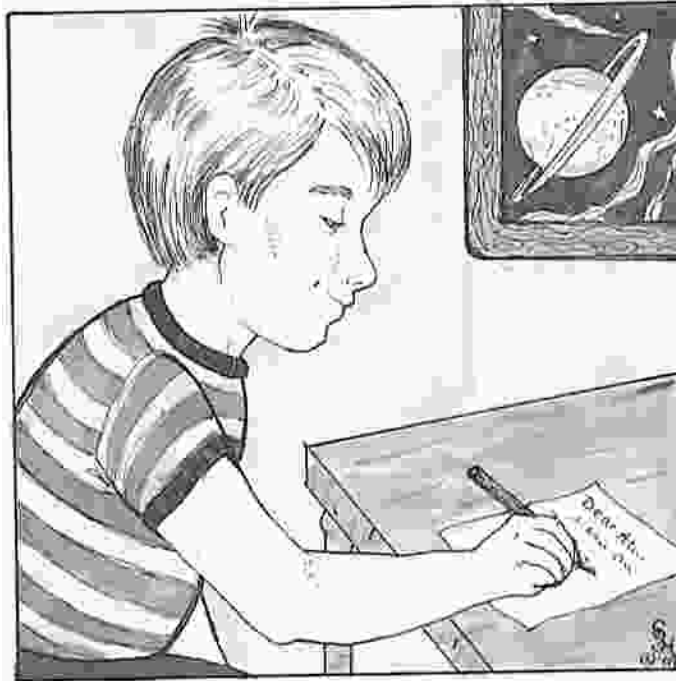
One last thing to consider when writing to a child is to keep in mind the importance of respect for the parents' wishes and beliefs. I work as a nanny for a boy who's almost 14. I've been with him since he was 5. His father is Jewish, though not orthodox. His stepmother is a non-practicing Christian. (His birth mother passed away, which is why I was hired.) I'm a Latter-day Saints Christian. I ignorantly supposed that we would have similar conservative views on certain subjects. That isn't the case! As a nanny, I have always respected the parents' beliefs and have never tried to indoctrinate or redirect his parents' teachings, religious or political. I will, however,

give him my honest view when he asks me questions. I also present both sides of a subject and let him think about it for himself. I express faith in him and his ability to come to his own conclusions. On occasion, I inform the parent about conversations we've had when I feel it is warranted. The parents know my views, as well. They respect me, but more importantly, they trust me.

Likewise, when writing letters to children, it is important to respect the parents' beliefs, ideals, and how they wish to raise their children. It is not appropriate to try to convince the child of anything. Any ulterior motive is inappropriate when writing to children. If you do not know the parents' views, such as might be the case with an sf pen pal, it's best to stick to science fiction, fantasy, and non-controversial subjects. If things come up, such as religion and politics, it is appropriate to state your opinion in a kind and gentle manner, with respect to opposing views. It is never appropriate to discuss sex with a minor, regardless of age or gender. That not only protects them, but you, too. The last thing you want is to be accused of anything.

Sarah E. Harder I doubt that any of you will have issues regarding inappropriateness. It is

common sense that most reasonable people naturally follow. As I said, I never had an issue with inappropriate adult pen pals—and I had many pen pals in my childhood! If I could encourage you in one way, it would be, above all, to have fun! It can be a very rewarding experience being a child's pen pal. You get to witness the world, including fandom, through the eyes of an innocent child whose world is only just beginning to expand. You have a unique opportunity to create a lasting friendship, a meaningful bond, and great memories—not only for the child, but for yourself as well.



Honor and Strength

By Denise Fisk

Several years ago, a movie called *Gladiator* came out. In it, Russell Crowe played a Roman general named Maximus. He was the head of the emperor's whole army, a responsibility that he didn't take lightly. He was fair to his men and expected the best of them. He was also an excellent tactician, which made for many victories over their numerous enemies.

When the emperor suddenly died from suspicious

means, Maximus refused to serve his son, the new emperor, Commodus. Commodus lured him with all sorts of promises, but Maximus stood firm: he would not serve this usurper. Maximus suspected that Commodus had something to do with the emperor's death.

So Maximus found himself stripped of his title and on his way to being killed in the forest. He managed to escape his captors and stole a horse to go home to his wife and son in Spain. Once there, he discovered his estate in smoking ruins and his wife and son killed. The grief almost

killed him. However, he lived, only to become a slave. At first he resisted this new role, wanting instead to die and join his family in the next world, but he soon adjusted and became one of Rome's greatest gladiators.

Throughout this movie and story, a theme ran through all the situations that Maximus found himself in: honor and strength. While a general, he told his men to fight with honor and strength. As a gladiator, he told his fellow fighters the same thing. He would not be a general under Commodus because of honor. He would not give in to the evil around him. Instead, he found inner strength to get through the day and do what had to be done.

These qualities of honor and strength are universal and timeless. In so many ways, our fractured society seems to have forgotten these lessons. Instead, many folks seem so self-absorbed in their own world that they barely have time to consider their neighbor and treat him or her with respect. Many politicians care only about their own issues and tune

out their constituents. I could name many more examples, but you get the point.

On the other hand, there are many good people out there who do conduct their lives with honor and strength. They give back to the world what gifts they're given, making this a better universe for all. I applaud actor Brad Pitt, who has given millions for housing in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. I also applaud organizations like United Way that run food banks and fund other endeavors to help those less fortunate.

I try to govern my life by Maximus's principles. I volunteer each week at different venues, giving back, in my own small way, to the community. I try to treat each person with respect and dignity. I also live with a continuing illness, and sometimes it's hard to deal with it. But the words "honor and strength" come back to me.

And I do my best to live by them.

An Itch for Quidditch

By Jack Robins

I am a Harry Potter fan. I have read all seven books and saw all six of the movies. However, I have not gone so far as to get and play any of the Harry Potter games flooding computers today.

I once suggested to a born-again relative, "Read the books. They're funny." He shuddered and said, "I will not read a book that promotes witchcraft!" As if anyone reading Harry Potter would immediately want to learn how to be a witch or a wizard. I never asked him what he thought of fairy tales, most of which have evil witches. For example: Hansel and Gretel, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves," or even *The Wizard of Oz*. Actually, the theme of the Harry Potter books is about the struggle of good versus evil, the good being Harry Potter and most of the wizard school and the evil being one very powerful wizard and his cohort.

In the Harry Potter books, there is a game called Quidditch. In the Harry Potter movies, it is fascinating to see two groups of players, all wearing colored capes, all riding high up in the air on broomsticks. Each team tries to throw a ball into any one of three baskets in the opposing team's end of the field (sort of like basketball) while a "keeper" (something like a goalie in hockey) tries to keep

the ball from going into a basket. Points are made by the number of successful hits into a basket. In Quidditch, there is also a tiny ball with wings, called a snitch, that flies around the court. Each team tries to grab the fleeing snitch because getting it ends the game, and the team holding it gets 100 points.

I was pleasantly surprised to read in a recent issue of *Chemical and Engineering News* that a new game has been gaining in popularity in many northeastern colleges. It is called Quidditch for Muggles (muggles being a term referring to people who cannot perform magic, meaning most—or all—of us). It started in 2005 at Middlebury College in Vermont, the brainchild of a couple of undergraduates. The players run around on broomsticks (they don't know how to fly yet) and try to throw a ball into one of three baskets while a keeper tries to keep them from being successful. Meanwhile, a fast runner, unimpeded by having to ride a broomstick, has the snitch—a tennis ball—in a bag dangling from a pocket or belt. The game ends when someone succeeds in grabbing the snitch despite being on a broomstick.

I wonder whether anyone is considering adapting the game for one of the conventions. That would be fun!

The Accidental Triumph of *Twilight*

By Jacqueline Lichtenberg

This fall, I finished reading *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer, a trade paperback edition from Megas Tingley Books, an imprint of Little Brown. On the front cover, the book says it will soon be a major motion picture. I've had this book on my to-read stack for probably half a year and gotten to it only now. I haven't seen the film yet, but I will. And, yes, I plan to read the sequels.

With Marion Zimmer Bradley's oft-quoted admonition "The book the writer writes is not the book the reader

reads" in mind, let's take a good look at *Twilight* and the phenomenon of popularity in general. As a writer, I can see what Meyer did with *Twilight*, how she did it, and what people love about it—as well as what people have been complaining about. Spoilers can't spoil a really good book, and nothing I've read about *Twilight* before I actually read the novel made a dent in my own enjoyment of the story.

The story is great, but more on that later. First, let me point out there are many technical glitches that should have been fixed in the editorial process. One glitch that really grated on my nerves was the portrayal of a non-cell

phone, dial-up Internet culture, and then three quarters of the way through the book, a character casually pulls out a cell phone—upon which nobody remarks—and from then on cell phones are everywhere. That's a continuity glitch. I can't imagine how that slipped through. I'm used to reading fanzines, manuscripts, and advance reading copies, so errors like that don't really spoil the enjoyment of the story.

Twilight grabbed me from the first page. I opened it because it's a vampire story, but I stayed with it because of the locale. Years ago, I considered moving to Port Arthur, which is close to the main setting for the story. I ended up living in Phoenix, where the author lives, and where part of the story is set. So I know both settings. That might color my responses. The coincidence might not be random.

I really do like, or maybe love, *Twilight*. I love fanzine writing and the "Mary Sue," of which *Twilight* is a fair example. But Meyer has committed—and sold to grand effect—a massively unskilled novel. That is a very common thing to have happen. So reading *Twilight* is like reading a really delicious fanzine more than it is like reading a tour de force like Michelle West's *Hidden City*, which will curl the toes of any writing expert—and tickle most readers too.

The massive skill deficit behind *Twilight* is rooted in the expository lump and scene structure. There is no mastery in Meyer's skill at hiding the lump, which is almost the entire middle third or even half of the novel.

I don't know if anyone taught Meyer "show don't tell" skills to avoid the expository lump in the sequels, or if all the praise made the editors protect her from learning these skills. I've seen that kind of pressure ruin new writers, and I've seen writers—Katherine Kurtz, for example—bear up under it and improve in skills despite roaring sales.

The expository lump is a *tell* instead of a *show*, and the most common cause of lumps is lack of conflict. Without conflict, there really is no neat way to show anything. With conflict, showing is easy. Showing is illustrating with actions, or in the parlance of film, staying off the nose. The writer can't illustrate something that doesn't exist. Conflict brings things into existence.

In *Twilight*, the expository lump is disguised as dialogue, mostly between two people: the vampire Edward and the human Bella. The ostensible point of all this dialogue, which isn't up to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* standards, is "getting to know you." It consists of questions about character, back story, and world building. Without the appropriate conflict, there really is no other way to convey this information but with "on the nose" dialogue.

When you as a writer find yourself stuck in a dialogue trap, you know you have a missing conflict, and possibly a missing character. In order to get this complex and fascinating world across, the plot stops dead in its tracks while two people dance around each other and probe each other—but without being at loggerheads or cross-purposes, or in opposing camps or misunderstandings, or secrets, or anything that illustrates a conflict. That problem is easily fixable on second draft if you know what caused it.

What really irritates people, even readers who can't put their finger on it, is that the plot stops dead to progress a relationship that contains no conflict, either internal or external, and therefore does not progress. The relationship

starts out perfect, without conflict, and with only a little strangeness that is easily accepted by both. There's nowhere to go from perfect, so there's no plot and no plot progress. During the dialogue scenes, the relationship progress *becomes* the plot, but there is no conflict, so it just sits there—not even qualifying as a subplot.

That could have been cured easily by an editor sending it back with a rewrite note saying, "Put the werewolves and the killer vampires inside the school with Bella and Edward in chapter one, and rework it so the threats escalate." As it is written, both human and vampire look at each other, storm and fume a bit at the awful problem of being attracted to a soul mate, and then—gracefully and without event—accept the fact that they're soul mates and proceed to ask each other questions about the nature of vampirism and relations between vampire and human, their respective childhoods, etc. The question of whether a vampire even has a soul never comes up.

Plot *and* subplot are at a standstill during this. Not even the third plotline of Bella's mother following a second husband around a baseball circuit in the southwest interferes with the "getting to know you" conversations. Another set of (possibly werewolf) characters circle the edges and provide a hint of foreshadowing, but they don't matter to the "getting to know you" or to the ultimate threat (killer vampires) that finally causes some action, albeit meaningless and easily resolved.

The werewolf premise sticks out like a sore thumb, a "plant" for future books. The plot action here is created by some other vampires who just happen by at an awkward moment. That violates a cardinal rule of storytelling, which, if violated, disqualifies the piece as a novel.

That rule is simple. Accidents can trigger a plot—right before or just at (or just after) the beginning, opening, chapter one, or preface. Accidents can cause plot problems, but only if placed at the beginning of the story. Accidents can be the catalyst beat of a script. The theme then becomes something having to do with accidents—karma, well-deserved poetic justice, an illumination of character that explains why someone deserves the adventure or comeuppance, or how things you don't deserve happen to you anyway.

But the cardinal rule is that an accident cannot *resolve* a plot conflict. Romance needs conflict. Conflict is sexy. But because *Twilight* has no conflict, there's nothing to resolve. The un-caused, un-summoned, expected only by precognition arrival of killer vampires is an *accident*, so it's in the wrong place in the narrative. It should be in chapter one. The arrival of stranger vampires who just wander into town triggers the run-for-your-life sequence that ends in (off-shot, off-stage) violence, but it's without conflict.

That structure is the reason for the expository lump. The only reason to insert the random band of vampires at that late point, after the "getting to know you" sequence, is to attempt a "show don't tell" that it's dangerous to get involved in the affairs of wizards and that this little girl—Mary Sue—character is tough enough to handle that danger. Or so she thinks.

The flaws in *Twilight* are legion. I won't enumerate more here because the point of this discussion is not how

bad this novel is, but how *good* it is, and why and how it has achieved such fame and glory.

I don't know the real story of how *Twilight* got to be such a best seller, nor how it got to become a film. But through my unique cross-section of the field of science fiction, fantasy, and romance, I see a clue. The fact that *Twilight* has been financially successful in the woeful shape that the narrative work is in tells me something.

I, personally, am delighted and tickled that Meyer and her novels are so successful and have become films. This might be the break we've been waiting for. Those events, which appear on the surface to be Meyer's personal triumphs, just as Harry Potter appears to be J.K. Rowling's personal and individual triumph, are in fact much, much larger than those individuals.

Meyer's, Rowling's and even *Buffy* creator Joss Whedon's successes can be viewed as due to the confluence of what you might call magical forces. In the magical view of the universe, everything (people, places, things, artifacts) is connected by unseen threads of energy, resonances. The universe and all of us are of one piece.

Rowling's work paved the way for *Twilight*'s success. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, more than 400 million copies of Harry Potter books have been sold. The movies made more than \$5.3 billion worldwide. We all, as writers, aim for such towering achievement and pursue it with dogged determination and soaring aspiration.

We sometimes believe, because we are embedded in a Hellenistic world, that success such as that which Meyer has achieved is something you do on purpose. Somehow, she has just had a little luck that we haven't had, due to no particular trait of her own that we don't share. Not only that, but she's not as good a writer as some. That assumption can trigger jealousy—"Why should she have all the luck?" "It's just not *fair*!"—and jealousy runs counter to one of the 10 Commandments of the Bible. The *magical* view of the universe provides some good reasons for that prohibition on coveting, as well as the means to avoid coveting.

Look again at all the Greek myths and you see the gods constantly attacking each other from jealousy, covetousness, or just to steal to demonstrate power. Coveting is deeply embedded in the Hellenistic philosophy, so deeply that you can't even find it stated, because it's assumed to be an element of human nature that is a reflection of the gods, immortal and unchanging.

What if something couldn't be stolen? What if it had to be shared? When the product you are selling is entertainment, it gets complicated because what entertains you is influenced by those invisible connections that bind us and our material universe. Life is never simple.

Did Meyer's success come only from her own efforts? *Entirely* and only from her own efforts—and the efforts of those around her, people she knows, who helped her materialize these novels? Or do we need to examine a much broader cross section of reality to understand what is happening in the world and why—and therefore perhaps understand where it's all going and what it means?

The phenomenon of one person writing another person's mentally sketched—or obsessively dreamed—story and selling it happens so often that Hollywood has a

phalanx of lawyers who return submitted manuscripts unopened with stern notes of legal warnings. Any writer who originates something thinks it's original because they haven't seen it anywhere else. Yes, it might never have been made visible anywhere—but it might have been made visible somewhere the writer has never had access to. One originator might think the other originator stole something, or plagiarized.

Fans have accused *Star Trek* of stealing their fanzine ideas. I know that many in the *Star Trek* offices had read at least some Kraith. Fans see a lot of Kraith elements turning up in the films—elements that were heretical when I first wrote them. I did things such as destroying the Enterprise NCC-1701, or giving Spock a sibling, or placing Spock's family high in Vulcan society. Any good writer looking at *Trek* would have done the same, no stealing involved.

The assumption that what you dream inside your own mind is original and belongs only to you is rooted in the Hellenistic view of the universe, the scientific view. In the *magical* view of the universe, though, not only is it possible for other creators to envision or create what you have dreamed privately, it's a necessary condition for the complete description of a magical universe.

Thus, if you've internalized a magical view of the universe, you can't ever feel the urge to covet another's work, success, or possessions. The overlapping creation phenomenon is only one small example of how the real world really works. We are all connected, of one piece, even in our dreams—or perhaps especially in our dreams.

Ideas are "up there" somewhere, and they penetrate this plane of existence following whatever channel of least resistance they find. You might be standing under one of those penetration points at any time in your life. Just because you have the idea doesn't necessarily mean you can manifest it. The individual who can manifest it will have a certain kind of natal chart, be under certain types of transits, and have a soul that's due for whatever lesson they would learn by manifesting that idea.

Ideas that are manifested often go nowhere commercially. A book might bomb and sell only a few thousand copies (or a few hundred e-book copies). A movie might not make it past the festivals. An invention might be a dodo before it's manufactured. But every once in a while, the right person in the right place at the right time of their life, at the right time of the evolution of the world and maybe humanity, will also receive an idea just at that moment, and of their own free will they might act on it.

Bang! It goes viral because a lot of humans are harboring that idea, can almost hear that idea rattling around "up there" above their minds where we are all connected, all of one piece. The public might recognize the thing as their own dream even if they've never remembered dreaming that dream.

That's what happened with *Twilight*.

This essay was published previously in a slightly different form in Alien Romance (<http://aliendjinnromances.blogspot.com/>) on Oct. 6, 2009. Reprinted with permission of the author. You can learn more about Lichtenberg and her work at <http://www.simegen.com/jll/>.

Convention Report: Dragon*Con 2009

By David Speakman

Ever since I first stumbled upon Dragon*Con (yes, that asterisk is really part of the name) in 2001, it has become an annual pilgrimage for me, depending upon my poverty level. This is a very limited story of the 23rd annual Dragon*Con, a multimedia convention held in Atlanta every Labor Day weekend, as seen through my eyes.

My report is limited because it has to be. Dragon*Con is, I believe, the largest of the fan-run conventions. To call the event a "convention" is really an understatement—just like saying the Mall of America is a store or calling J. K. Rowling an author who sold a few books. Dragon*con is actually 30 very large tracks, which, compared to other cons, are in reality semi-autonomous and fully staffed mini-conventions that just happen to be under one Dragon*Con umbrella and spread among four large downtown hotels.

The *Star Trek* track alone, if separated from the rest of Dragon*Con, would be the largest *Trek* convention in the world. Other TV tracks include *Stargate*, Joss Whedon, American SFTV, Asian SFTV and British SFTV. Other tracks include *Star Wars*, anime and manga, comics, costuming, filk, horror, and goth tracks. There is also a full-fledged four-day science fiction, fantasy, and horror film festival, as well as top-notch writers workshops.

For those who pooh-pooh media, the literature tracks are also huge. Along with the generic science fiction and fantasy literature track, there also are specific tracks for book fandom including Anne McCaffrey's worlds, Tolkien, the Wheel of Time series, and alternate history—each with four days of programming, 12 hours each day.

Officially, Dragon*Con has 35,000 attendees. From what I hear, those numbers are purposefully lowered by the organizers because of fears that the fire marshal would go into conniption fits if she found out that the number was actually closer to 50,000.

There is simply too much for one person to do, see, or even take in. But for my fellow Neffers, I'll explain how I spent my Labor Day weekend in Atlanta this year.

My focus is on the American science fiction and fantasy TV group, which I first became involved with in 2001 when I was part of a cadre of folks working (unsuccessfully) to save a little steampunk TV series called *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne*. Anyway, on to the con report.

Getting There

Flying from Silly Valley (that is what I call Silicon Valley) in California to Atlanta is easy—but not cheap. We almost didn't go this year because Rich was expecting to be laid off from his job and we had no money to spare. But our friends all chipped in and paid our way there. They bought our hotel room, too.

Dragon*Con is a four-day event: Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday of Labor Day weekend. As veterans,

we usually try to arrive on Thursday, as do most of our con friends. That gives us all a day to meet up and catch up on all that has happened over the past year—without the crowds of newbies—or the threat of missing one of the programs.

Unfortunately, aside from my Silly Valley-to-Dragon*Con travel mates of Rich Speakman and Jen Coats, none of my other con friends this year were N3F members. There is always hope that will change next year.

Friday

It is common for cons to start programming on Friday nights. New this year, Dragon*Con responded to the fact that may, many con vets started arriving on Thursday. So the con started some of the more popular tracks' programming at 10 a.m. Friday.

In fact, the first—and probably most mainstream media newsworthy event that happened at this year was the Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner panel at 10 a.m. Friday. CNN carried part of their banter, which was quite humorous, especially the teasing Nimoy gave the first captain about not being invited to be in the 2009 movie remake.

My mother-in-law, a huge *Trek* fan, saw the coverage on CNN and actually called us to let us know that Nimoy and Shatner were at the convention. We told her, that, yes, we knew—and were there to watch it live in a room with about 3,000 of our fellow *Trek* geeks. That was just the first 90 minutes of the first day of programming.

My highlight on Friday was going to a *Farscape* panel (I am a huge fan) to watch Ben Browder, Claudia Black, Virginia Hey, and Lani Tupu relive a show that began 10 years ago and was prematurely cancelled by the Sci-Fi Channel. I think the stars of the show were genuinely touched by the turnout a decade later for a show that any folks have either long forgotten or never heard of.

I also made a point to travel to all four hotels and put N3F pamphlets out on fan tables on Friday.

That night, we skipped the parties, which included a couple cosplay and masquerade balls (Zombie Prom, Pirate Bay) and had a quiet evening with friends.

Saturday

On Saturday the three-hour time difference and jet lag finally caught up with us—we overslept and missed the Dragon*Con parade, which is a community event. Atlanta-area parents bring their kids to see TV and movie stars, as well as hundreds of fan dressed up.

We also missed the cast of the new *Battlestar Galactica* give their take on the season finale. That was really too bad because a couple of years ago when the show was relatively new, we befriended Aaron Douglas, the actor who played Chief Tyrol on *BSG*. In the crowds of Dragon*Con and other shiny objects that caught our attention in the next few days, we never did get the chance to look him up and say hello this year.

Being on a limited budget, the dealer's room was for window shopping only. In previous years, we've been known to bring an extra, empty suitcase just to hold the stuff we bought while at the con. That didn't stop me from looking through the used books, comics, board games, and T-shirts, though.

Jet lag still in high gear, we persevered and hosted our annual con suite party. Among our group is the leader of the American science fiction and fantasy media track, so our little party has become the unofficial official party for staff members (and occasionally guests of honor) who want to duck away from fawning fans for a few hours. Throwing this party, we missed the *official* official parties (Dance of the Concubines [belly dancing], *Star Wars* dance, *BSG* party, and the Rainbow Dance for LGBT fen).

Sunday

By the time Sunday arrived, we were getting used to the Eastern Time Zone. We went to another *Farscape* panel in the morning, but we split up afterward. Rich and Jen continued their geek fest while I stopped by a panel tribute to Forrest J Ackerman, who died in December 2008.

That day, I also stopped by to talk to this year's organizers of the annual Robert A. Heinlein blood drive, which was co-sponsored by the producers of the new TV show, *The Vampire Diaries*. You got a free vampire T-shirt if you gave blood. I thought the tie-in was rather brilliant—and it paid off; they got more than 2,000 donors that weekend. I also learned that the TV series was being filmed in Atlanta. They were doing casting calls for extras and bit actors at the cons. Having the perfect face for radio, I passed on a screen test—but was sure to tell others I thought may have been interested.

I missed the 2009 Miss Klingon Empire Beauty Pageant and instead caught the “unauthorized” peek at *The Hobbit*, which is being made into two films by the same folks who brought Lord of the Ring to the big screen. I learned some interesting stuff about the production and found it quite amusing that some people asked for no spoilers. I suggested to them that they read the book. It's quite short compared to other Tolkien works.

I ended up skipping a lot of the con programming on Sunday as I stayed in the room reading my law books and briefing cases. Being a 40-something taking night law school in addition to working full time really cuts into my fanac—even when I'm at a con.

Monday

Rich and I ended up missing all of the Monday programming because our flight back to Silly Valley left that morning. Instead, we made sure to say goodbye—until next year—to the friends we only see at our yearly jaunt to the southeast. By the time we made it home, it was dark and about bed time. I turned in early as I had to be at work in the morning and had a wills and trusts night class.

Jen was on con staff—so she didn't come back to the Silly Valley or Bay Area until Tuesday.

Wrap Up

The next day, my boss wanted the scoop on when the next

Wheel of Time book(s) would come out. I told him.

Rich, Jen, and I also made plans to go back next year. Our rooms are already reserved, and our tickets are already bought.

Guests of honor already signed up for next year include Laurel K. Hamilton, Brandon Winn Sanderson, Rene Auberjonois, Jonathan Frakes, and Marina Sirtis.

But I gotta say, if you hate crowds, Dragon*Con is not for you. If you are excited about the chance to spend four—or five—days with thousands of other geeks and goblins over Labor Day, then I'll see you at Dragon*Con 24 on Sept. 3-6, 2010.

The best part for me? By then, I'll have graduated law school and will already have taken the bar exam. 100% of my time will be devoted to geeking out with 50,000 of my closest friends. Hope to see you there!

Editor's Note:

Do you regularly attend science fiction, fantasy, and horror conventions? The editor of *The Fan* would like to publish a con report in every issue of the clubzine if at all possible. Help keep other members up to date on the latest literary and media developments! Submit a con report shortly after you get home.



Lee and J.J. MacFadden

Jim Munroe, No Media King

By Heath Row

After a stint working as managing editor for *Adbusters* magazine, Canadian writer Jim Munroe published his first novel, *Flyboy Action Figure Comes with Gasmask*, in 1998 with HarperCollins. His experience with that publishing company, which is owned by Rupert Murdoch, inspired him to forsake the world of commercial fiction and start his own imprint, No Media Kings.

Since then, he's published three more novels, including *Angry Young Spaceman*, *Everyone in Silico*, and *An Opening Act of Unspeakable Evil*. In 2007, Munroe published his first graphic novel, *Therefore Repent!*, which was drawn by Salgood Sam and put out by IDW in the United States. That book told the tale of a post-Rapture Chicago.

Munroe's most recent project, the comic book series *Sword of My Mouth*, takes place in the same world. With the first issue published in May 2009 by IDW, Munroe and collaborator Shannon Gerard are publishing the next five bimonthly issues online. To date, three issues have been published, and you can subscribe for \$1 an issue. A hard copy of the resulting complete graphic novel will be published in May 2010.

The Fan reached out to Munroe via email to explore some of the ideas—science fiction and spiritual—represented in *Sword of My Mouth* and *Therefore Repent!* Our conversation also touched on self-publishing, the current economy, and parenthood.

The National Fantasy Fan: In some ways, you use the Rapture as a plot device similar to how other writers approach the Singularity. For those authors, the Singularity is an almost spirituality-free technological or cosmological inflection point, while the Rapture is clearly rooted in Christianity, particularly modern-day conservative evangelism. Was that a conscious parallel? How do you think the Rapture compares to the Singularity?

Jim Munroe: It comes down to what kind of flavor you like your fantastical to be. With sf, it's rationally flavored, and with fantasy it's mythologically flavored. But I would argue that you're eating more or less the same stuff.

The Fan: Do you favor fantasy over science fiction? You tend to get lumped in with sf, but I can see how what you write might be more along the fantasy lines.

Munroe: I have the same approach, regardless of what I'm writing. I identify more as an sf writer, because the fantasy I write is more new-weird than sword-and-sorcery—I find the "chosen one" heroic narrative that is so dominant to be politically reactionary and also just boring.

Arguably, depending on your reading of the ending, *Therefore Repent!* could be classified as sf or fantasy.

The Fan: Your vision of the Rapture seems to be less

about the coming of Christ and more about the return of magic and acceleration of human evolution and mutation—despite the presence of angels. How do you think the Rapture will play out?

Munroe: I don't believe in it. But in general, I think that people will deal with any big event like this in a multitude of ways. Some will ignore it, some will find ways to cope with it, some will benefit from it.

The Fan: Why choose the Rapture as a plot element, then? What interests you about it?

Munroe: It's crazy, is all. People bodily floating into the sky at the behest of an omnipotent god? It makes the spells and rituals of Harry Potter look totally reasonable. I'm also fascinated by Indian myths. They're weird and colorful, too, but I feel more entitled to play with my own heritage's mythology. I also enjoy the idea of God separating us into teams of Sinner and Saved, because I know I'd be damned and wouldn't give a damn.

The Fan: Your perspective is radically different than that of, say, Tim LaHaye, whose *Left Behind* series has sold something like 65 million copies over its 16 volumes. What sources did you draw on to inform your view of the Rapture?

Munroe: I read the Book of Revelation, and have always been interested in the American Bible Belt interpretation of the Rapture. I haven't read the *Left Behind* series. I go back to different takes on Batman—there's the campy Batman in the TV series treatment on one end of the spectrum, and Frank Miller's *Dark Knight* on the other.

The Fan: In terms of that spectrum, what end do you fall on?

Munroe: Depends on the material. I'd probably enjoy taking serious things unseriously and vice versa.

The Fan: Why set the comic in Detroit?

Munroe: I wanted a place that would contrast with Chicago, which is where the first book was set. It was a place I was personally interested in—and it was a good excuse to visit and research it. When I told residents what I was there for, they would often joke that Detroit was *already* a post-apocalyptic city—which was initially another draw. But the more I visited and discovered how residents were working to change the city the more it became obvious that self-sufficiency projects like urban agriculture would actually put them in a better place post-Rapture than more economically powerful cities like New York.

The Fan: Are the projects and methods you include in the comics based on real-life examples?

Munroe: Yeah. The urban farms and whatnot are amalgams of stuff we saw or read about.

The Fan: That makes me wonder whether there are *other* cities where the future is at an inflection point—either because of crisis or a critical mass of innovation. Silicon Valley could be one such place. New Orleans could be another. What other locations do you think are poised to be post-apocalyptic?

Munroe: I love the video game *Half-Life 2*'s post-apocalyptic vision of European cities—spaceships and gothic architecture are just beautiful together.

The Fan: This series is a followup to your 2007 post-Rapture graphic novel *Therefore Repent!*, but it's your first comic book series, per se. How was the experience writing the graphic novel different than writing fiction? Was writing the serialized comic different, as well?

Munroe: Well, it takes me about six weeks to write a graphic novel comic script, while writing a prose novel takes about six months. But then it takes the artist a year to draw it. So it's quite a different publishing schedule.

I wrote both *Therefore Repent!* and *Sword of My Mouth* in chapters or issues—more for pacing and tradition reasons with *TR!*, because there was no plan to publish them as 22-page comics.

The Fan: Why publish the comic book digitally?

Munroe: It seemed like a good way to keep us on track as creators and a good way to let super-keen folks read it as it was available.

The Fan: In the first issue of the comic, which was published by IDW, you list 10 editors, including sf author Nalo Hopkinson. Normally there's one editor, maybe two. What role did so many editors play in the creation of the comic?

Munroe: Feedback is a super-important part of the process for me, but I prefer to get a broader sample than

the traditional one or two people. I've also been really blessed with the amount of people generous enough to give feedback at early stages, so I take advantage of it.

The Fan: You also thank the Ontario Arts Council and *Broken Pencil*, the Canadian zine review zine. Much of what you do is funded by arts grants. Do you think more comics creators and sf authors should pursue that funding or production model?

Munroe: It's certainly good to have a variety of funding possibilities. My only piece of advice is that people don't become dependent or reliant on one source, be it market or government based, since that leads to bitterness and bad art.

The Fan: What do you mean by that? How can funding—or just how you support your own work—lead to bitterness or bad art?

Munroe: People can propose great projects that for whatever reason, either a diametrically opposed jury or bureaucratic quotas, etc., don't get funding. If they're not willing to make it happen *without* that money, it's easy to get bitter. Or people can cater to what they think the councils are likely to fund, and then have to follow through on a project that's already creatively compromised.

The Fan: Speaking of creativity, you became a father a couple of years ago. Has Sidney changed how you think about what you do? Has parenthood changed how you think about the future?

The Fan: Not yet. Rather predictably, there are a lot of babies popping up in my games, movies, and books, though.

Readers can learn more about Munroe and his work online at <http://nomediakings.org>.

Infest Wisely, Lo-fi Sci-Fi

Two years ago or so, Jim Munroe branched out from his writing and other projects to write, produce, and release a film project. The result, *Infest Wisely*, is a seven-episode lo-fi science fiction film that riffs on nanotechnology, surveillance culture, identity theft, computer viruses, and living off the grid. Tapping friends he made through another of his projects, the DVD zine *Novel Amusements*, Munroe was able to select six skilled and savvy co-directors to help make his vision reality. Those directors include Jon Sasaki, Kirby Ferguson, Craig Macnaughton, Chris McCawley, Rose Bianchini, and Benny Zenga.

Because of the grassroots nature of the project, Munroe and his collaborators were able to make the movie for free (OK, for less than \$700)—which means you can watch it for free. The episodes are available for viewing online, and the full film is also available via BitTorrent. Additionally, you can buy a DVD of the movie for \$10.

Just before Thanksgiving, I sat down to watch the

movie with my wife. It's decidedly lo-fi—some of the outdoor scenes in particular are under lit—but that doesn't get in the way of the story. In fact, it enhances it. The episodes are standalone, interconnected scenes in which a loosely knit cast of characters explores the impact of the release of the tiniest product in the world. Those nanites—delivered in chewing gum—enhance human abilities and experiences, but at a cost.

Understandably, people who are concerned about the new technology rise up and organize against it, and the sequence of shorts provides a wonderful narrative arc that reminded me at times of Rudy Rucker's novels *Postsingular* and *Hylozoic*. Release, rebellion, result.

There are many interesting ideas included in the movie merely as characteristics of the world in which it's set: photographic vision, mouth swab payment plans, self-contained microwave takeout bags, and talking cats.

If *Infest Wisely* hints at the future of cinema, you'll find me in the front row.

For Frozen Bones

Fiction by L.A. Vern Loretz, Jr., and Heath Row

Out here in the wilds and the deeps of space, it's part of a star rigger's most senior security officer's job to return an old shuttle craft in need of replacement to the nearest star base or station—and then return to the ship by piloting the new one as a test run. That was one way to make sure a new ship passed muster. And that was Commander Andras Szilagyi's responsibility.

It had taken several days for him to reach his destination, and the trip had been long, low key, and lonely. But once he'd arrived at the space station—affectionately called Meffert's Stoop given its beloved commander and location on the edge of the Ansel Belt—he'd enjoyed a week of leave from his duties on the Subterfuge, the rigger that he called home. Now he sat at the helm of one of the newest small spacecraft, a Herschel H-X with an experimental number that denoted its ability to endure some of the rare rigors that occur out here in the behind, between, and beyond.

Rather than chart a course straight back to the Subterfuge, Andras thought he'd take advantage of being alone—and the experimental nature of the new Herschel—first. While enjoying himself on Meffert's Stoop, he'd heard about an anomaly on the surface of a nearby planet. Apparently, the desolate entity sported polar caps of sand and frost—during its long winter.

Occasionally, wind buffeting the orb, over time, would erode the frost, revealing the dark sand underneath. Given the length of the winter and the strong foothold of the frost, that sight was rarely witnessed. But the result was breathtaking. A polar region could look like a vast, ranging desert littered with the curved and cracked bones of some giant creature or beast. Andras aimed to see what he could see—and then point bow toward home.

What he hadn't accounted for, though, was the added time to his journey. It had already been four days out from Meffert's Stoop, and the planet was still just a cluster of pixels on his chart. He'd wired ahead that they shouldn't expect him back immediately, but this was taking longer than he'd planned.

"A state-of-the art vessel, and here I sit alone," Andras muttered in his native Hungarian, his accent thick. A bottle of vodka left a tight, moist ring on the surface of the console on which he rested his elbows, his hands in his

hair.

"You are not alone," said a uniformed woman sitting near the co-pilot's seat.

Andras jerked upright and glared at the woman.

"Who... who are you?"

"Hol—"

"Holly?"

"Yes. Holly. Communicant."

"I—I remember you from the Nussbaum 59." The 59 was another space station somewhere in the wilds and the deeps, but it had been almost a year since Andras had docked there. Holly had been one of his acquaintances at that time during leave, a reformed exotic dancer he'd met just before he was slated to embark again—after he'd explored most of the 59 levels of the station, as well as the pleasures and challenges they had to offer.

The lovely brunette, who'd eased him through most of his last day—and night—on the 59, seemed to flirt with him with her eyes, their surface reflecting some of their vague, shared memories.

"We... we enjoy talking with intelligent people."

"Still, how'd you get on board without the special codes and the ID hand print and the retina scan?" Andras's mind was moving slowly and unsurely and his tongue was tripping over the words and phrases of a less-familiar language: Standard. He only spoke his native tongue when alone or with

his fellow galactic diaspora. He looked at the bottle of vodka on the console to gauge its level. He should slow down if he wants to see the polar bones. Or if he wants to communicate clearly.

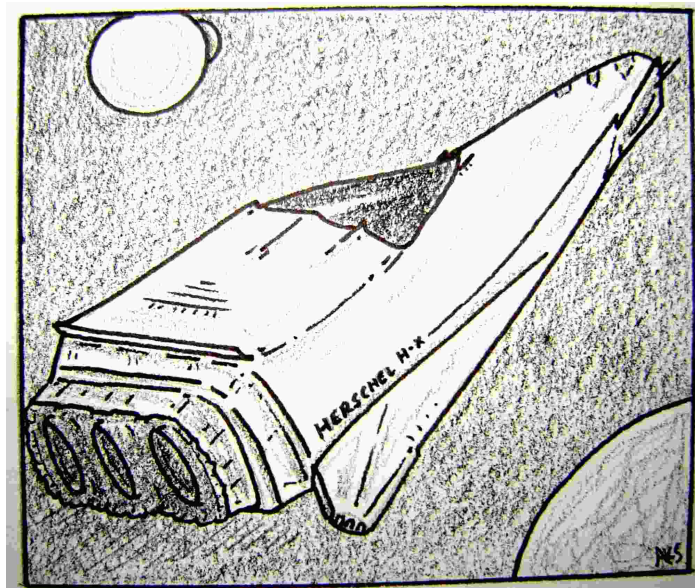
"I would rather talk about you, Andras. Why are you so discouraged?"

He shook his head slowly. "I never should have planned this side trip. If anything, my cabin fever on the way to the Stoop should've inspired me to hustle home to the boys after leave. I've done nothing but wake up, eat breakfast, check the panels, take a nap, eat lunch, check the panels, take a nap, eat supper, check the panels, and retire for the night. And drink."

"Work must be done."

"Yes, but ad infinitum ad nauseam?" He hoped his face wasn't as sour as his stomach.

"Boredom and monotony have no meaning to my kind." He gazed quickly at his image in the reflective surface



Angela K. Scott-Cox

of the console panel. Turning, he quipped, "Do you like my new mustache?" He made sure to pronounce the final term with precision and pride. While on Meffert's Stoop, Andras had stopped shaving—his upper lip. While he continued to shave his face and chin, he'd been growing a mustache for more than a week. It hadn't fully arrived yet, but it was aggressive. Some of the hired women on board the Stoop had found it amusing—and entertaining.

"Yes, very."

"Now, if I can only pass my speaking lessons." Andras had been using some of his solitary time on the shuttle run listening to Standard language tapes and practicing along to improve his diction and vocabulary.

"I'd be more than eager to assist, Andras."

"Susie sells seashells at the sea shore... swore... shore?" He was half joking.

"Correct! You did very well. Elocution perfection is near."

"Szarl!" He swore in Hungarian.

"I do believe in you, Andras," said the epitome of physical beauty.

He smiled, wagging his eyebrows suggestively. "I was thinking of watching a kinetto. Maybe a skinner?"

Holly reached her hands out toward him as though to push him away playfully and then, as if scared or unsure, withdrew suddenly.

"You are much more important than a mere movie."

"Stop it," he chimed, lowering his chin and blushing slightly. Was it the vodka?

"You have a delicious demeanor, Andras."

"I remember you tasting good, too."

Holly moved even further away. She was sincerely embarrassed.

Andras pivoted himself in the deck chair, his feet firmly planted on the diamond metal plating deck. He was composed, in control. And it was time for another course adjustment check.

"I am glad that you snuck aboard, Holly. Did you know that this shuttle was named after..."

"William Herschel, the discoverer of the Sol system's seventh planet, which he named after the Earth's mythical Greek god of the titans, furies, and cyclops?"

He turned back toward her. "How do you know that?"

"I have access to all kinds of knowledge," she responded coyly.

Andras offered her the bottle of vodka, but she refused

—"I cannot imbibe." So he took another swig and continued to talk, his accented voice going on and on with what could only be construed as the tired ramblings of a lonely man far, far away from home. Not once did the eyes, though facing forward through the viewscreens into the dark and the deep, desperate for companionship, notice Holly's face begin to fade out and then snap back into focus.

There was a good reason for that. It was then that Andras lost consciousness.

Andras woke up a good many hours later, a woman—not the communicant—softly shaking his right arm with her pale hand. "Andras?" she repeated until he awoke and acknowledged her.

"Why am I here in the sick bay of the 'Fuge?" he asked.

The nurse allowed him to rise. "When you didn't make it back on schedule, we reran some fuel use calculations and realized you might be drifting out toward the Ansel Belt. So we sent a skulker to go grab you. He found you sitting up in the new Herschel's pilot's seat sound asleep."

"I was sleeping?" he asked, surprised and concerned.

"That's right," she replied with a pointed smirk. "At first we thought you had passed out from drinking—you'd polished off much of a bottle. But you hadn't just run out of fuel. Your air cans had also run low. You were suffering from oxygen deprivation."

"Are you sure?"

"What we don't understand is how you kept yourself alive so long."

"That girl," he said. "Holly Communicant. Is she OK?"

The nurse's brown hair swung slightly from side to side as she stopped to peer at him, serious as a soldier.

"There wasn't anyone else in the shuttle. We found you all alone."

"What?" Andras was completely mystified.

"Well," the nurse regained her composure. "I've given you the green light." She sighed with a glint of amusement in her eyes. "You'd best go along now, Andras. You know how much the Admiral dislikes lazy crewmen."

The senior security officer swung his legs around and off the gurney and headed for the nearest lift, feeling the bones in his wrist, his chest, and his face. Those frozen bones could have been his, he thought. Before him lay a longer life—and the bridge.



Angela K. Scott-Cox

2009 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest

Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

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 judges.
3. Manuscripts 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. Email attachments of Word documents are also acceptable.
4. Contestants can enter any number of stories, provided that each is accompanied by a separate entry blank and fee. 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.
5. The entry fee is \$3 per story for N3F members in good standing, and \$5 for non-members. The extra \$2 is for printing and publicity, which will be paid for using N3F funds. The basic \$3 is for judging expenses and prizes. While N3F members are encouraged to enter the contest,

members will *not* receive any preference in judging. Because of a long-standing agreement with the British Science Fiction Association, BSFA members can pay the same fee as N3F members.

6. 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.
7. Send all manuscripts, accompanied by SASEs, entry forms, and fees to the contest manager: Jeff Redmond, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505-3830; redmondjeff@hotmail.com. Make checks payable to William Center. Well-concealed American cash (dollar bills) is also acceptable. All entries must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2009.
8. The preliminary judge, who will pick the 10 or 12 semi-finalists, will be a knowledgeable member of the N3F. The final judge will be a professionally published writer.
9. The N3F assumes no publishing rights or obligations. We want to encourage professional sales, not fan publication. All entries will be returned after the contest is over, if accompanied by an SASE. Winners will be notified as soon as the judging is completed. Announcements and notifications of winning entries will be made in March 2010. Jeff Redmond himself won the N3F writing contest in 2004. 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, 2009. Good luck!

Entry Form

(Detach or photocopy. Must accompany all entries.)

Title of story (for identification): _____

Author's name and address: _____

Author's email address: _____

Author's age: _____

Enclosed is the entry fee of \$5 (for N3F or BSFA members, the fee is \$3). I have read the above rules for the 2009 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and I agree to them.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mail to: Jeff Redmond, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505-3830

Re: The Review Section

Unless otherwise indicated, the reviews editor compiles and writes the review section. Members of the N3F are invited and encouraged to submit reviews, preferably by email, although postal mail will be accepted. If you send a review by email and do not hear back within a reasonable length of time, please write to check on its status. Publishers: We are especially interested in receiving new books to consider for review. Jon D. Swartz, 11600 Starview Trail, Austin, TX 78750; jon_swartz@hotmail.com.

Editor: Heath Row (HR) for Jon D. Swartz (JS).

Contributor: R-Lauraine Tutihasi (RLT). **Illustrator:** Ruth R. Davidson.



Books

Bone Dance: A Fantasy for Technophiles by Emma Bull (Orb, 2009)

This is a reprint from 1991. Emma Bull is one of our Arizona authors, though she's originally from elsewhere.

The book is as the subtitle indicates. It reads a lot like regular sf and takes place after some sort of apocalyptic event that is obliquely referred to, but some magic also seems to work in this universe.

The action takes place in the Twin Cities sometime in the not too distant future. The apocalyptic event has left its mark on the place, but there are remnants of many buildings remaining. Much of the infrastructure no longer exists, and there are people who would hoard what exists and try to make money off others.

Sparrow seems to have no memory before waking up sometime before the story takes place. He knows a lot about electronics and makes money by selling videos, which are now difficult to find, to collectors. One day he experiences a gap in his memory, and life seems to be out of his control. We follow him ricocheting from place to place, more often than not unwillingly. Eventually things start to fall into place, but there is a problem. There are some beings that can take over the minds and bodies of other people. One of these beings is really bad news, but the challenge is trying to find an effective method of taking him out.

The story is fairly exciting and keeps the reader going to find out what happens. The book is not too long at a little over 300 pages. I found it to be an enjoyable read.

Familiarity with the Twin Cities probably helps in the enjoyment. I've never lived there but have visited enough times that certain place names resonated with me. (RLT)

The Book of Hyperborea (Necronomicon, 1996)

Tales of Zothique (Necronomicon, 1995)

Just before we moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles, I went on a little Clark Ashton Smith binge. Practically back to back, I read the Necronomicon Press editions *The Book of Hyperborea*, Smith's more Lovecraftian stories in terms of the Cthulhu Mythos; and *Tales of Zothique*, which collected Smith's endtime cycle of stories about the last inhabited continent on Earth.

I'm more familiar with the works of H. P. Lovecraft, and this was my first exposure to Smith; to be honest, I thought his writing would be more similar to Lovecraft than it is. Even though the "toad-god" Tsathoggua takes a page from the Cthulhu Mythos, I didn't get the sense that the stories were all seriously intended, and although I enjoyed the stories, I occasionally found Smith's vocabulary unnecessarily fancy.

That said, in the first volume, "The Ice-Demon," "The White Sybil," and "The Coming of the White Worm" are particularly atmospheric and effective. The introduction and postscript, which are best read after the short fiction, add a lot in terms of publication history and connection with Lovecraft's work.

Close on the heels of *The Book of Hyperborea*, I cracked the covers of *Tales of Zothique*, which I enjoyed even more thoroughly. Less a pastiche of Lovecraft than the previous volume's stories, the Zothique cycle is an oddly backward-looking take on the end of the world. Zothique is a single supercontinent at the end of times, like Pangaea was in the beginning. The end of history and the penultimate future isn't one of supertechnology and science, but of magic and necromancy. As there are fewer and fewer human survivors (who, nevertheless, seem to live longer and longer), they bring back more of the dead to populate their dead and dying cities, as well as to perform chores and run errands.

My favorite stories from that cycle include "The Isle of the Torturers," "The Master of the Crabs," "Necromancy in Naat," and a story whose title I forget (and whose text I can't find online; I'm sure it's somewhere in *The Eldritch Dark*) about a man with a sort of amnesia who crosses a desert to find a long-lost city over which he once lorded.

Smith isn't as good a writer as Lovecraft, but it was fun to finally read him. Inspired by the experience, I'm also interested in the writing of Frank Belknap Long, whom I often conflate with Clark Ashton Smith. (Much like I confuse *The Hudsucker Proxy* with *The Shawshank Redemption*, but that's another story entirely.) (HR)

***Faery Moon* by P. R. Frost (DAW, 2009)**

This book is a cross between a modern fairy tale and a mystery. The action, except for a few flashbacks and interludes in fairy dimensions, occurs in Las Vegas. Each chapter begins with an interesting factoid about the city.

The main character is Tess Noncoir , who is human but apparently has some non-human(s) in her ancestry. She has also trained to fight demon incursions from other dimensions. Her partner is an imp named Scrap, who is invisible to normal humans. According to the publisher's note at the beginning of the book, this is the third book to feature Tess Noncoir .

Tess is in Las Vegas to attend a writer's conference, being a fantasy author, and hopes to attend a show titled *Faery Moon* while she is there. Tickets are sold out, but she manages to get some anyway.

She discovers fairly early on that there is something fishy about the show, and soon she is embroiled in untangling the mystery.

There is also a romantic aspect. Tess, being a very attractive young lady, has more than one man interested in her. She is also interested, but for different reasons for each man. Both of her suitors also become entangled in solving the mystery, which seems to involve a mysterious woman who calls herself Lady Lucia.

Interpersonal relationships are a key part of the book. Tess has brought her mother with her on the trip. At the beginning of the story, her mother is still mourning the loss of her husband. Las Vegas seems to be very good for her, especially after she meets an old girlfriend.

The mystery keeps the reader reading. Once the mystery is solved, there are things that need to be done, and readers want to know how and whether they get done.

As books go, it's of little or no deep philosophical importance, but it's entertaining and will provide a light diversion. (RLT)

***Julian Comstock: A Story of 22nd-Century America* by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor, 2009)**

I wasn't too sure about this book when I started it. It was a little slow going at first, but the action gets going soon thereafter and really didn't let up until the end. As the title says, this is a future history, if you will. The world has suffered badly from global warming and the end of oil. Fighting and even out-and-out wars have broken out. The United States of this book has 60 states, Canada having joined the union. As the book opens, America is at war with Europe. The leader of the U.S. is a despot and uncle of Julian. He was so jealous of his power that he had Julian's father executed on trumped-up charges. Democracy has eroded to the point where elections are a sham, and the presidency is practically an inherited position. There is also a religious power with its headquarters in Colorado Springs. The presidency is dependent on the military to keep it in power.

The narrator of the story becomes friends with a youthful Julian when he is sent away from New York City, now the seat of government, for his safety. Soon, however, the war with Europe is going badly; and Julian, his

companion, Sam, and the author get caught up in a massive military draft. The author is a mere working boy, lucky to have been taught to read and write. He has adventures he could never have dreamed of having. From someplace near present-day Calgary they are taken to Montreal where the fighting is fierce. Julian, who is travelling incognito, becomes a war hero. Because of various complicated plot twists, his identity becomes known when the war heroes are taken to New York City. Once there they are somewhat safe staying with Julian's mother. But Julian's uncle finds a way, he thinks, to get Julian out of his way by sending him out on another military campaign. I will tell no more here, for that would give away the story.

The author of the story is an aspiring writer, and some of the decisions he makes in the furtherance of his career end up having unintended consequences. In a way the book is a tale of a boy growing up more quickly than he could ever have imagined. Military and political tides sweep him to places he never expected to reach. The book is intended as a biography of Julian Comstock. It is that, but it's much more.

I think Robert Charles Wilson has made a great leap forward in his writing. His previous smash hit, *Spin*, was highly entertaining and held some of the transcendence that is fully mature here. The book is highly recommended for anyone who enjoys character studies, good writing, and speculation about the future. (RLT)

***Libyrrinth* by Pearl North (Tor, 2009)**

Libyrrinth is a young adult novel, and the cover blurb indicates that the author has written regular sf under a different name. If you happen to know an author living in Royal Oak, Michigan, maybe you know her other works. I haven't a clue.

I was interested in this book for two reasons. Among other things, I enjoy reviewing books for young people. In a former life, I was a librarian. The book takes place many years in the future when society seems to be divided into two main groups. One group reveres the written word and guards a large library. The other group views books as a bad influence and seeks to destroy as many books as they can. The great unwashed masses find themselves on the edges of this struggle.

The main character is Haly, a mere clerk in the library. She has the rare gift of being able to hear the printed word. Because of her gift and because of various circumstances that shape her life, she finds herself in a place where she can influence the future of humanity. As a clerk, she really doesn't know much; and we readers learn how things stand as she does. When she begins her adventure, her travelling companions are Selene, a librarian, and Claudia, a kitchen servant. Haly becomes separated from them early on. Both she and Claudia learn a lot as the plot develops. Even Selene learns things she hadn't realized before.

Selene's mother, who rules one of the powerful city states, plans a big battle against the Eradicants, those who seek to destroy books.

All these threads come together as the book comes to

an exciting conclusion.

Throughout the book are quotations from many existing works. Some I recognized, and others I didn't. There is a list of the quotes and their sources at the end of the book.

I found this an exciting book to read and an interesting one. I recommend this book to anyone who loves to read. (RLT)

The Return of Tarzan by Edgar Rice Burroughs (Ballantine, 1975)

I wasn't that thrilled by the first half of the book—the initial urban setting, the globetrotting, the ongoing presence of Nikolas Rokoff—but I *blazed* through the remaining 150 pages of the novel. Oh, that second half! I particularly enjoyed the portions in Opar, last—and lost—outpost of Atlantis. Tarzan's exchanges with La were quite enjoyable, as was his escape from the dungeons and discovery of the virgin gold. I also received a thrill from the chapter "The Lottery of Death," less because of the buildup to the selection of the food source and more because of the final sentence and its "cackling laugh." Could have been something straight out of William Hope Hodgson.

The description of the settling of Opar, as well as the Waziri's reception—and crowning—of Tarzan ("When they saw that he was white they were filled with awe, for never had they seen a white savage before, and at his great muscles and giant frame they were struck with wonder and admiration.") reminded me of tales of a pre-Columbian white visitor who brought the Americas a higher civilization and technology; as well as the White Lady of Brandberg, Namibian rock art that predates white settlement or visitation of South Africa.

Whether such white visitors came from outer space (one theory) or Atlantis isn't all that important. But was Edgar Rice Burroughs aware of such stories? An interesting thread to weave into the Tarzan mythos, even if it's not explored further. I look forward to other writing relating to Atlantis and Opar.

In the end, Jane is reunited with her father, Tarzan is reunited with Jane, Rokoff gets his, and Tarzan even takes a step to reclaiming his namesake and social position. Not a bad wrapup to a book I took a little while to warm up to. I've already pulled *The Beasts of Tarzan* off the shelf. (HR)



Movies

American Scary

In the first week my wife and I lived in Los Angeles—I

recently moved—we went to the movies three times. We didn't have any furniture in our apartment yet, so there wasn't anywhere to sit—and little to do. So we entertained ourselves by exploring area restaurants and sitting in front of the silver screen.

One of the films we saw in that week was the 2006 documentary *American Scary* directed by John Hudgens. It's a loosely organized but appreciative look at the role of horror hosts such as Zacherley, Ghoulardi, and the more recent cohort of hosts, including Dr. Gangrene.

When I was growing up in southern Wisconsin, my horror host was Toulouse Noneck, or Rick Felski, who hosted *Shock Theater* (and later, *Shock Rock*) on WISN-TV in Milwaukee in the '80s. Sadly, Felski wasn't included in the documentary.

I don't remember a lot about my viewing of *Shock Theater* or the movies they aired, but I do remember feeling like I was getting away with something on those Saturday afternoons. I also remember appreciating the dash of levity Noneck brought to the proceedings, alleviating some of the tension that might have been created by the scary movies.

Even though there's currently a large and healthy subculture focusing on horror hosts, many of whom are now on the Web, making video podcasts, or doing public access television programs, I'm more interested in the original generations of horror hosts who were on local network affiliates. And I've found a handful of what appear to be interesting books on the topic.

Those titles include *Chicago TV Horror Movie Shows: From Shock Theatre to Svengoolie* by Ted Okuda, *Television Horror Movie Hosts: 68 Vampires, Mad Scientists and Other Denizens of the Late Night Airwaves Examined and Interviewed* by Elena M. Watson, *I Was a TV Horror Host: Memoirs of a Creature Features Man* by John Stanley, and *Ghoulardi: Inside Cleveland TV's Wildest Ride* by Tom Feran and R. D. Heldenfels. Stanley, who hosted *Creature Features* in the Bay Area, also penned *Creature Features: The Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Movie Guide*.

Do you have a favorite horror host? Any additional book recommendations—or preferences among the above? (HR)

District 9

We also saw *District 9* at the Beverly Center 13, a once illustrious multiplex at the top of a large shopping mall a mile west of where we live. (We walked; we are rare pedestrians in Los Angeles.)

Directed by Neill Blomkamp and produced by Peter Jackson, the South African sf film is inspired by the events in District 6 of Cape Town during the days of apartheid. It's the story of an effort to relocate the extraterrestrial "prawn" from one holding camp to another, as well as interspecies respect and bioengineering.

It's a wonderful film. Sharlto Copley is great as the office worker assigned to leading the relocation effort. And the creatures designed and created by Weta Workshop and Image Engine are excellent.

Like *Children of Men*, it's a dystopian, thought-

provoking movie that will appeal to people who might not tend to explicitly like science fiction but who are interested in speculative scenarios addressing political science and the environment. It's also an interesting parallel watch to the remake of *V*, now airing on ABC. (HR)

Fantastic Planet

When most people consider the history of science fiction- and fantasy-related animated film, movies such as the 1977 Rankin and Bass TV cartoon *The Hobbit* or the 1981 feature length *Heavy Metal* might come to mind. N3F members are encouraged to dig a little deeper and spend some time with this 1973 animated movie directed by Rene Laloux. Based on the French novel *Oms en Serie* by Stefan Wu, the movie is a class-conscious portrayal (1954 *Animal Farm* cartoon, anyone?) of the relationship between the Oms—from the French *hommes*—and their giant alien masters, the Draags.

Shades of L. Ron Hubbard's later novel *Battlefield Earth*, one of the Om slaves learns about the science and society of the Draags and leads a revolution. The solution isn't as clear cut as one might think, and the end result is more coexistence than succession.

The animation, drawing on the art of Roland Topor, is somewhat surreal and occasionally trippy, which is appropriate for the time. There are also hints of hallucinogenic drugs and meditation throughout the movie. The animation is lush and beautiful—I could watch the DVD's menu screen's loop for some time—and the soundtrack by Alain Goraguer is also worth paying attention to.

I forget how I learned about this movie, but I'm really glad I watched it. *Fantastic Planet* has supplanted *The Hobbit* and *Heavy Metal* as the most worthwhile animated films in the genre. Underrated! (HR)

Television

V

I've been aware of ABC's *V* remake for some time, but my awareness was tinged with skepticism and largely disinterest until just two days before the premiere aired. I saw an article in the *Los Angeles Times* and got a little giddy. When the original *V* first aired in 1983, it was amazing. Blew my mind. Excited me. And frightened me. I was 10, and my friend Rich and I cut ads for the show out of *TV Guide* to tape on our bedroom and closet doors.

That was the original miniseries, not the later series, which I didn't watch, really, and which I didn't enjoy as much. There were media tie-in novels, too, and while I have one or two, I've not read them. In any event, the

original miniseries—as well as the first novel adaptation by A. C. Crispin that followed—was brooding, dark, and sinister. As I remember it.

Leading up to the premiere, Syfy aired the original miniseries from the '80s. I've DVR'ed them, but I've yet to rewatch. However, I *have* now watched the first episode of the remake. It's pretty good.

So far, it seems to be true to the original series. Many of the characters seem to be reprised, or at least enough so that the roles they play and the relationships they support can be reprised. And it's a little more slick and stylish, even if not as dark as *Battlestar Galactica*, perhaps. Technological advances in special effects mean that the show's a slight improvement on the original, but we'll see if the redux improves on the first instance's overall tenor any.

I'll most likely give this another episode or two before I decide to really get into it or not. If it doesn't hold up, I'll drop it and retain my memories of the first airings when I was in grade school. 'Cause that *V* was awesome. (HR)



Zines

Yipe! Vol. 1, No. 1 (November 2009)

Despite its number, this is the second issue of *Yipe!*, the “costume fanzine of record.” The *first* first issue, numbered “Xero,” came out in October. This 24-page edition includes several solid features: a piece by Jaime Martinez about creating a large-scale Smaug puppet/costume for a local children's theater; an article on the Wild Wonderful King Vintage Museum in Oakhurst, California, which features antique clothing; and a short story about shedding your skin. The typeface is slightly large, so the issue feels a little skimpy for its page count, but it's an excellent idea for a zine. More how-to pieces would be welcome, as well as coverage of cosplay in general. <http://www.yipezine.com>

Correction: The trade copy of *The Fan* that I mailed to Redguard, publisher of *On Loving Dracula*, which was reviewed last issue, was returned to me. He says he's still receiving mail at that address but suggests interested readers address mail to *Absent Cause*, P.O. Box 1568, New York, NY 10276 instead of in care of Redguard.

What's in the N3F Readers Canon?

In January 2009, *The Guardian* published a list of 1,000 must-read novels. That feature included a section on science fiction and fantasy that listed about 125 novels. Selections ranged from popular icons such as Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* to lesser-

read historic works like Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1924 novel *We*. What's in *your* sf and fantasy canon? Contact the editor or fill out the form online at <http://tinyurl.com/n3f-canon>. Let's see what we come up with.

Bureaus and Activities Reports

Artists Bureau

Alas! I didn't get an Artist's Spotlight in this issue, but I will make it my primary goal for the next issue.

If you draw and have an interest in doing some illustrations for upcoming articles or stories please let me know so I can include you in my artist's email list. This is actually quite fun! It's sometimes challenging but always worth it as you stretch your imagination and artistic abilities. And of course, you can always send me filler art for use as needed. I look forward to hearing from you!

Also, if you are a writer of a story or article and it is illustrated, please drop me or the artist a line to let them know what you think—especially if you like how they represented your piece. A little praise and encouragement is always appreciated and can go a long way in inspiring an artist to continue to volunteer for illo assignments, including any of your future items!—Sarah E. Harder

Birthday Cards

I sent out 19 cards (give or take a few) since last issue. If any new members want to make sure I have your birthday, please email me at _____ or write me at _____.

—R-Laurraine Tutihasi

Blind Services

First of all, I want to thank Heath Row for donating to this bureau. It's much appreciated. I also wanted to let everyone know that I'd like to know if there are any guidelines that I need to follow for doing the blind services bureau, and if there are, who I should contact for them.

If I don't hear anything soon, I plan to start recording the September issue so I can get that out immediately. I'm sure there are some people out there who are anxious for it. If, for some reason, it would be too late to mail the tape, knowing that the next issue is coming out soon, please let me know so I don't end up sending out a tape of an issue that no one will listen to.

I do apologize for the lateness in producing these tapes.—Steven Rose, Jr.

Correspondence Bureau

Hello friends. There's nothing new to report for this bureau. My most recent thoughts are contained in the pen pal article printed elsewhere in this issue.

I also want to take the opportunity here, since it pertains to a form of correspondence, to thank my friends on the round robins I am or have been a part of for your friendship. I don't currently have any pen pals but get my writing fix through the round robins. It's so fun! If you haven't tried a round robin I'd highly recommend contacting Lorna to get on a list. And of course, if any of you would like to be put on a pen pal list as a potential pal, please contact me.—Sarah E. Harder

Gaming

I am hard at work on the next edition of The Collector

Supreme's *All the World's Wargames*, a complete listing of board wargames. I'm currently up to 3,700 titles. I also have students working on a matching project, "All the World's Computer Games," as a thesis project, although that project is advancing more slowly.

Who invented computer games? Many readers will remember that Arthur C. Clark invented communications satellites, describing how they would function and why geostationary orbits were the best location. Clark might also have invented computer games, i.e., given an accurate description of the item even if—as with communications satellites—the technology to implement it was lacking.

Readers with appropriate collections might be able to consult Arthur C. Clark's *The City and the Stars*. Near the front of that novel, the hero and several of his friends are exploring the underworld in a boring machine, the boring machine being part of a computer game. The hero tries to take the machine to the surface and crashes the software, thus showing the "computer crash through parameter out-of-bounds" error.

I propose that that is the first description of a computer game, albeit one with a really impressive gaming console. Any responses?—George Phillies

The Mangaverse

There was no love timewise before school started. I've also been getting extra migraines. Yay!

The Mangaverse is still on my mind. Hopefully, I'll be able to finish the new issue Thanksgiving weekend. It all depends on whether I get enough school work done before the break so I don't have to work my arse off during that time. Finals week is the week of Dec. 14, so if all else fails it'll be out come around Christmas.—Ruth R. Davidson

Neff Amateur Press Alliance (N'APA)

The apa limps along. It's doing OK, but we could use more members. Everyone is encouraged to participate. It's sort of like a group pen pal. It is bimonthly, and the deadline is the 15th of odd-numbered months (January, March, May, July, September, and November). For information, contact me at _____ or _____.

—R-Laurraine Tutihasi

Neffy Awards

Since the previous update, much has happened. Ballots went out, and votes were due by Nov. 15, 2009. By the time you have gotten this issue, the winners of the Neffy Awards should already have been tallied.

Unlike this report, which is short and sweet, if vague, the next report will be chock full of detailed and specific information for you.

The winners will be published in the next issue of *The Fan*, along with a call for nominations for the best of 2009.

To whet your appetite with a teaser, I can report from preliminary numbers that leaders in certain categories

might—or might not—include *Doctor Who*, *Heroes*, J. K. Rowling, William Gibson, io9.com, *Serenity*, John Varley, and eFanzines.com.

Additionally, we will start the process of wrangling volunteer writers for the first Neffy Awards book, which will feature fan-written reviews and profiles of Neffy Award winners over the past five years. Members who contribute will be paid handsomely in egoboo. The current plan for the Neffys is fan-given awards every year and a fan-written review and profile book every five years.

I am looking for a co-editor for this book, so if you are interested, please contact me. Warning: Editors are responsible for writing the material no one else wants to write—including, possibly, you—and dealing with me, so the task might be daunting and horrible. On the plus side, you do get your name on the front cover of a book that will be sold on Amazon.com. I'd like to get this book finished and to the publisher—we will self publish—by November 2010. That way we'll have it for sale for the N3F's 70th anniversary in 2011.—David Speakman

Round Robins

I have been busy and going through some things that have made it so that I haven't given the Round Robins the attention they deserve—or that I wanted to give to them. Unfortunately, I don't see that changing in the near future. So I feel inclined to resign as Round Robin bureau head.

If there is anyone who would like to take on the task, please contact me. It is actually really easy and fun to do. If I could stick with it, I would. I will continue to head it until a replacement is found or volunteers.—Lorna Hansmann

Short Story Contest

As of mid-November, we have received seven entries in the annual amateur short story contest. There is still time to

Secretary's Report

By Dennis Davis

I am your N3F secretary, and all of the information is as correct as we make it. Please contact me if you find a discrepancy or have not found your name in this report, which I completed Nov. 16, 2009.

Help me to serve you better by doing the following:

1. Check your information in the roster. Notify me of any changes.
2. Mark the expiration date on your envelope or include your renewal reminder card.
3. Send address corrections as soon as possible. The postal service charges me to return undeliverable zines.

My N3F email address is n3f_info@yahoo.com. If you give my email address out to someone, please give them the n3f_info@yahoo.com address.

Please send your checks to the secretary: Dennis L. Davis, 25549 Byron Street, San Bernardino, CA 92404-

submit, if you have a tale to tell. You should also feel free to encourage other writers. Help spread the word! The deadline is Dec. 31.

The current amount of entries is much better than the amount we had last year: zero. But we're still not quite to the two dozen we got in 2007. Regardless, a good showing! We look forward to reading and judging the entries.—Jeff Redmond

Webmistress

Here is a list of N3F Web sites:

<http://www.n3f.org>—general info and history of the N3F
<http://www.tightbeam.net>—site for all fans
<http://www.fandominion.net>—media blog
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/n3f/>—Neffy-only discussion

There is also an email list for announcements only. If you are not on that list, please let us know so you can receive announcements about topics such as who won the elections. No one wants to wait until March to find out! So please be sure to let me or Dennis Davis know that you need to be on the announcement email list. Also reach out to us if you've changed your email address or if you seem to be accidentally overlooked.

If you notice any broken links on the sites or think any updates are needed, pop me a line.—Ruth R. Davidson

Writers Exchange

No activity; no report.—Joy Beeson

Open positions: Computer Gaming, Convention Coordinator, Future Fandom, and Teaching Science Fiction. Contact the directorate to learn more.

6403. Make checks or money orders payable to William Center.

Key: GS=good standing, NEW=first time membership, RN=renewal, and REIN=reinstatement

New members:

NEW 1010 Majik Attic,

NEW 1010 Rowena Cherry,

NEW 1010 Angela Myers, P.O. Box 2136, Decatur, IL 62524

Address changes and corrections:

GS 1209 Ruth Davidson,

RN 1010 Valerie Mignault,

REIN 0810 David K. Robinson,

GS 0110 Heath Row, 438 N. Stanley Ave., Los Angeles,
CA 90036

GS 1209 Joe Schaumburger,

RN 0110 Mick Taylor,

GS 1209 R-Laurraine Tutihasi,

GS 1109 George Wells,

Expired list:

August 2009: Ginny Benson and Patricia King

October 2009: Jean Lamb, Jacqueline Lichtenberg,
George Phillies, and Jon D. Swartz

Reinstated:

REIN 0910 Denise Fisk,

REIN 0810 David K. Robinson,

REIN 0910 Steven Rose, Jr.,

REIN 1110 Susan Van Schuyver

Renewals:

RN 1210 Tom Feller,

RN 1110 Dorothy Kurtz,

RN 1110 L. A. Vern Loretz, Jr.,

RN 1010 Valerie Mignault,

RN 0910 Jack Robins,

RN 0110 Mick Taylor,

RN 1110 William Wharton,

Treasurer's Report

By William Center

Receipts

New members dues (includes reinstatements)	\$36.00
Renewal dues	\$170.00
Short story contest fees	\$10.00
Total receipts	\$216.00

Disbursements

Sept. 2009 zine printing	\$221.45
Sept. 2009 zine mailing	\$84.00
PayPal service charge	\$3.70

Total disbursements	\$309.15
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Nov. 15, 2009, report

Beginning balance (Aug. 15, 2009)	\$4,085.89
Additions	\$216.00
Subtractions	-\$309.15
Ending balance (Nov. 15, 2009)	\$3,992.74

Send all dues, new or renewal, to Dennis Davis, 25549 Byron Street, San Bernardino, CA 92404-6408. Make checks payable to William Center, not the N3F. Canadian and overseas members, please pay in U.S. funds.

In the Next Issue:

An introduction to the 2010 president and directors of the National Fantasy Fan Federation; announcement of the winners of the 2009 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest; an up-to-date membership roster for 2010; an interview with Jim Freund, host and producer of the radio program *Hour of the Wolf*; short fiction by George Phillies; a science fiction and fantasy artist's spotlight curated by Sarah E. Harder; a directory of local sf and fantasy clubs around the world; and more. Submission guidelines are on page 3.

Fan Speak: ARS to Apa-NESFA

Compiled and edited by Jon D. Swartz

Starting in Vol. 9, Nos. 1-2 (June 2009), *The National Fantasy Fan* will reprint the fandom dictionary developed by Jon D. Swartz—and available in full online at <http://www.fandominion.com/fan-speak>. We will publish the glossary as space allows over time in order to help bring the project to sf fans offline, as well as online.

American Rocket Society: Organization that built and used model rockets. At one time, the society was close to sf fandom.

&rea: Fannish visual pun and abbreviation for the name Andrea.

Amra: Hugo-winning sf fanzine (1963 and 1967, Amateur Publication) edited by George Scithers.

AMZ: Abbreviation for the sf magazine *Amazing Stories*. See *Amazing*.

André Norton Award: The André Norton Fantasy/SF Short Story Award, named for the prolific sf author, is part of a Florida state writing contest that started in 1989. Also, the name of an award, beginning in 2006, given by the SFWA for “outstanding young adult science fiction or fantasy.”

Anglofan: A fan from Britain. See *Anglofandom*.

Anglofandom: British fans, fanzines, clubs, conventions, etc.; closely allied with American fandom but distinct from it.

Animation cel: The original art painted on a sheet of clear plastic used in the production of an animated cartoon. Fans of comic art often collect animation cels.

The Analytical Laboratory: A department of *Astounding/Analog* that rated stories in each issue as determined by a poll of readers. Beginning in 1953, the top story in each issue was given a cash bonus by editor John W. Campbell, Jr. The “AnLab” reported on each issue for 38 years—from March 1938 through October 1976—and covered 2,500 fiction items. Although it was dropped with the February 1977 issue, it was revived in 1979 as an annual poll—in which *Analog* readers picked their favorite stories, fact articles, and covers from the previous year. The creators of these fan favorites are honored each year with AnLab Awards.

AnLab: Abbreviation for “The Analytical Laboratory,” which see.

AnLab Awards: See AnLab.

Annish: An anniversary issue of a fanzine, usually containing extra pages and features.

Ann Radcliffe Awards: A category of awards once presented by the Count Dracula Society for outstanding achievements in television, cinema, and literature in the

fields of sf, fantasy, and horror. The awards were named for Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, an 18th century gothic writer.

Ansible: Hugo-winning fanzine (1986) edited by Dave Langford, who has also won multiple Hugos for best fan writer. Publishing note: *Ansible* was revived with issue No. 51 in October 1991. Including nine irregular “half issues,” thrown in for special occasions, that’s 130 issues since its return, 180 in all.

Anthony Awards: Awards for mystery writers named for sf and mystery author and critic Anthony Boucher (pseudonym of William Anthony Parker White).

ANZAPA: An apa that serves fans in both Australia and New Zealand.

AOF: The Oklahoma Alliance Of Fans (1967-1983).

AOY/A.O.Y.: Abbreviations for *All Our Yesterdays*, a fan publication and a book by Harry Warner, Jr.

APA/Apa/apa: Amateur Press Association (or Alliance). A group of people who publish fanzines and send them to an official editor who mails a copy of each to each member in a regular bundle. Members comment on each other’s fanzines in a kind of group discussion. Usually some definition of minimum activity (minac) is required to maintain membership. Plural of apa is apae.

APAE: Plural of APA, which see.

Apa-Eros: An apa concerned with sex. See APA-69 Classic. See APA.

Apa-F: The first weekly, local club apa, written by Dave Van Arnam, that lasted for 69 mailings. See APA.

Apa-45: An apa whose membership is limited to those fans born in 1945 or later. See APA.

Apa-50: An apa whose membership is limited to those fans born in 1950 or later. See APA.

Apa-H: An apa about and in the form of hoaxes.

Apahack: A person who belongs to several apae at the same time, especially when that activity consists of most of his or her fanac. See APA.

Apa-L: An apa associated with the club LASFS. See APA.

Apa-Lambda: An apa on gay issues. See APA.

Apalogia: An apa, the title being a combination of and pun on the word apology. See APA.

Apan: A member of an apa, which see.

Apanage: An apa on children’s literature. See APA.

Apa-NESFA: An apa run by the New England Science Fiction Association. See APA.

(continued in a future issue)

Convention Calendar

The following conventions will occur between the release of this issue and the next issue of *The National Fantasy Fan*. Not all events can be listed because of space limitations, and con planners should send future event listings to the editor for possible inclusion. Please contact organizers before making travel plans; we are not responsible for changes or cancellations.

AnonyCon

Dec. 4-6, 2009, Stamford, Connecticut
Roleplaying and board games
<http://anonycon.com/>

SMOFCon 27

Dec. 4-6, 2009, Austin, Texas
Secret Masters of Fandom convene to discuss Worldcon
<http://www.alamo-sf.org/smofcon27/>

Steel City Con

Dec. 4-6, 2009, Monroeville, Pennsylvania
The Pittsburgh toy, comic, and children's collectibles show
<http://www.steelcitycon.com/>

Anime South V

Dec. 18-20, 2009, Destin, Florida
Anime, cosplay, and gaming
<http://www.animesouth.com/>

Manga and Exotic Worlds

Dec. 31, 2009, to Jan. 2, 2010, Vancouver, Washington
Science fiction, fantasy, manga, and anime
<http://www.mewcon.com>

IKKiCON IV

Jan. 1-3, 2010, Austin, Texas
Anime and pop culture
<http://www.ikkicon.com/>

Shadow Con XIV

Jan. 8-9, 2010, Memphis, Tennessee
Gaming and anime
<http://www.shadowcon.org/>

Anime Los Angeles 6

Jan. 8-10, 2010, Los Angeles
Anime, cosplay, and more
<http://www.animelosangeles.org/ala/>

GAFilk

Jan. 8-10, 2010, Atlanta
Annual filk convention
<http://www.gafilk.org/>

Ichibancon

Jan. 8-10, 2010, Concord, North Carolina
Anime, gaming, and pop culture

<http://ichibancon.com>

DeCONpression 7

Jan. 15-17, 2010, Columbus, Ohio
Adult-only science fiction, fantasy, and horror relaxacon
<http://www.decompression.org/>

MarsCon

Jan. 15-17, 2010, Williamsburg, Virginia
Writer guest of honor: David Weber
<http://www.marscon.net/>

Rustycon

Jan. 15-17, 2010, Seattle
Science fiction and fantasy
<http://www.rustycon.com/>

Twilight Convention

Jan. 15-17, 2010, Seattle
Official *Twilight* convention
http://www.creationent.com/cal/twilight_wa.htm

Arisia

Jan. 15-18, 2010, Cambridge, Massachusetts
"New England's largest and most diverse science fiction and fantasy convention"
<http://2010.arisia.org/>

Further Confusion

Jan. 21-25, 2010, San Jose, California
"The world's largest anthropomorphic convention"
<http://www.furtherconfusion.org/fc2010/>

ConFusion

Jan. 22-24, 2010, Troy, Michigan
Special guests include Robert McCammon
<http://confusion.stilyagi.org/>

COSine

Jan. 22-24, 2010, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Science fiction and fantasy
<http://www.firstfridayfandom.org/cosine/>

Visioncon

Jan. 22-24, 2010, Springfield, Missouri
Science fiction, fantasy, and gaming
<http://www.visioncon.net/>

BPA WAM

Jan. 28-31, 2010, Baltimore
Boardgame Players Association card-driven wargames genre con
<http://www.wamconvention.com/>

Con-Jour

Jan. 29-31, 2010, Clear Lake, Texas

Science fiction, fantasy, and horror
<http://www.conjour.net/>

Science Fiction and Fantasy Short Film Festival

Jan. 30, 2010, Seattle
Fifth annual film festival
<http://www.empsfm.org/programs/index.asp?categoryID=216>

Animation on Display

Jan. 30-31, 2010, San Francisco
Anime and cartoons
<http://www.aodsf.org/>

Aggiecon

Feb. 5-7, 2010, College Station, Texas
Annual science fiction convention produced by Cepheid
Variable at Texas A&M
<http://aggiecon.tamu.edu/>

Basauricon

Feb. 5-7, 2010, Basuri, Spain
International science fiction convention
<http://www.basauricon.com/english.htm>

Reenactor Fest

Feb. 5-7, 2010, Chicago
"Indoor convention for all reenacting time periods"
<http://www.reenactorfest.com/>

Riverside Dickens Festival

Feb. 5-7, 2010, Riverside, California
11 original adaptations of Charles Dickens's works will be produced
<http://www.dickensfest.com/>

Supercon XVII

Feb. 5-7, 2010, Rochester, Minnesota
17th annual relaxacon
<http://supercon.info/>

What-the-Hell?! Con

Feb. 5-7, 2010, Greensboro, North Carolina
Comics, Web comics, and roleplaying gaming
<http://www.guilford.edu/yachting/wthcon/>

Xena Convention

Feb. 5-7, 2010, Los Angeles
15th official Xena convention
<http://www.creationent.com/cal/xebur.htm>

G-Anime

Feb. 6-7, 2010, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada
Anime, manga, video games, and pop culture
<http://www.ganime.ca/>

Capricon 30

Feb. 11-14, 2010, Wheeling, Illinois
"Chicagoland's only four-day science fiction convention"
<http://www.capricon.org/capricon30/>

Boskone 47

Feb. 12-14, 2010, Boston
NESFA's regional science fiction convention
<http://www.nesfa.org/boskone/>

ConDFW IX

Feb. 12-14, 2010, Dallas
Science fiction, fantasy, and science
<http://www.condfw.org/>

Farpoint

Feb. 12-14, 2010, Timonium, Maryland
Science fiction media
<http://www.farpointcon.com/>

RadCon

Feb. 12-14, 2010, Pasco, Washington
Science fiction and fantasy
<http://www.radcon.org/>

Twilight Convention

Feb. 12-14, 2010, San Francisco
Official *Twilight* convention
<http://www.creationent.com/cal/twilight.htm>

DunDraCon 34

Feb. 12-15, 2010, San Ramon, California
Roleplaying gaming
<http://www.dundracon.com/>

Con Nooga

Feb. 19-21, Chattanooga, Tennessee
Multi-fandom convention
<http://www.connooga.com/>

Furry Fiesta

Feb. 19-21, 2010, Dallas
Furry fandom
<http://www.furryfiesta.org/>

Condor XVII

Feb. 26-28, 2010, San Diego
Science fiction and fantasy
<http://www.condorcon.org/html/mainmenu.html>

Continuum

Feb. 26-28, 2010, Melbourne, Australia
Speculative fiction and pop culture
<http://www.continuum.org.au/>

Gallifrey One

Feb. 26-28, 2010, Los Angeles
The 21st annual North American Dr. Who celebration
<http://www.gallifreyone.com/>

SheVaCon

Feb. 26-28, 2010, Roanoke, Virginia
"Southwest Virginia's premier sci-fi and fantasy convention"
<http://www.shevacon.org/>

National Fantasy Fan Federation

Membership Application

☐ New Member ☐ Reinstatement ☐ Joint Membership ☐ Gift Membership

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Postal Code, Country: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Male: ☐ Female: ☐ Birthdate: _____

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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> APAs (amateur press associations) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fanzines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Filk singing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio | <input type="checkbox"/> Games and video games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blogging | <input type="checkbox"/> Movies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Online activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartooning, cartoons, and animation | <input type="checkbox"/> Publishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collecting | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading and book clubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comic books | <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers and technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Roleplaying games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions and clubs | <input type="checkbox"/> Round robins (group letters) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence | <input type="checkbox"/> Taping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costuming | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching science fiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DVDs and videos | <input type="checkbox"/> Television |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editing | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |

Which would you prefer?

☐ The National Fantasy Fan in PDF sent to your email address ☐ The clubzine printed and mailed to you

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 of: _____

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?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting at conventions | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing for club publications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Corresponding | <input type="checkbox"/> Publishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Name of Sponsoring Member (if any): _____

Dues are \$18 per year (\$22 for Joint Memberships) which includes subscriptions to the club's fanzine as well as other activities and benefits. Make checks or money orders payable to William Center (the treasurer). **All payments must be made in U.S. funds.** Mail dues and application to club secretary Dennis Davis, 25549 Byron St., San Bernardino, CA 92404-6403. Please allow at least eight weeks for your first clubzine to arrive. You can also sign up online at <http://n3f.org>.

Send all address corrections
and undeliverable copies to

Dennis L. Davis
25549 Byron Street
San Bernardino, CA
92404-6403

“Science fiction is an argument with the universe.”—Farah Mendlesohn