

IONISPHERE



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Publication of the National Fantasy Fan Federation Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau

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Published for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. To join or renew, <http://n3f.org/join/membership-form> Memberships with the official TNFF via paper mail are \$18; email memberships are \$6. Public memberships are free. Send payments to Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah, Nevada 89049. Paypal contact, treasurer@n3f.org .

The Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau, established in the 1980s by then N3F President Irvin Koch, is dedicated to establishing better relations between science fantasy writers, artists and editors and the readers of science fantasy who call themselves fans. Science Fiction Fandom has always been very discursive, fly-by-night, touch and go, and has found this to be all right with them; but a lot of them started making sf a main consideration. Now fandom has been threatened with dissolving, but we don't want to have anything we've been a part of come to that. It's always been a talking thing, and we've started to do some talking; it's about how far we've been from one another, and how little is coming from us now. We want to get together and produce. This bureau looks for ways and means for doing so. We want science fiction to re-materialize and be a going thing for people well acquainted with one another, readers having real contact with what they read.

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Editorial

Look Forward in Hope

Hopelessness is a bad state of mind to be in, a bad way to feel. The word "hope" signifies there being negative factors all around us. It indicates a dependence on positive things coming from elsewhere. You "hope" things will work out due to what happens elsewhere, and try to focus on where things are positive. Hope accomplishes nothing except to keep you focusing on what you consider to be things which are of a positive nature to yourself. It might also spread to or come from others so there is more hope around, rather than less, which happens when you get out of range of people with an attitude dissimilar to your own. It is a term similar to faith, which consists of continuing to have the same positive attitude toward something which was originally a good proposition, and seemed guaranteed to remain one.

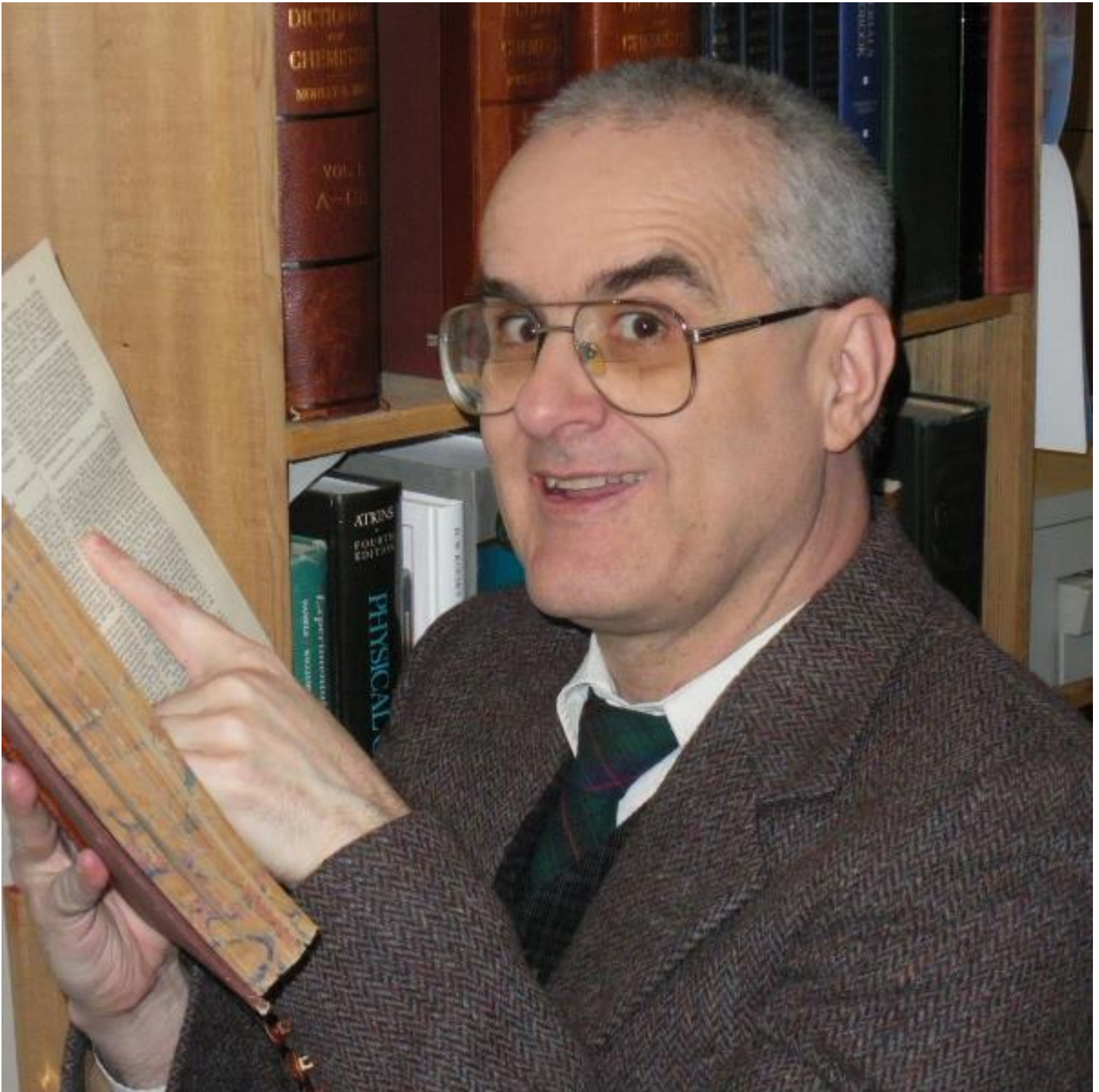
When is hope lost? When there is nothing around to promote the continuance of such hope, and where nothing can be found except hypocrisy and shamming where once hope was guaranteed. Is this our predicament in these "dark days"?

I suggest that there is no percentage in surrendering to it. I like to keep Ionisphere and my other NFFF zines on the up and up. There is no sense languishing in bad circumstances. We should hang on, do the best that we can manage, and wait for better circumstances. When things are too much one way, when there is a totality of negative circumstances, it gets to seeming like there is nothing one can do but be negative. But that tends to beget change, and we are bound to see light beginning to occur here and there, and looking better than what there now is. To hold on while waiting, we might sustain ourselves with the light which exists within us, and not at any rate become believers in darkness. We might aim ourselves at improvement, and hope that it is actual. We'll be on a better boat than the next cruiser, which might have pirates of the Sargasso in it; no reason to envy that, even if they might have a sleek ship.

I've come to realize that the depression existing in science fiction and fantasy fandom is due to the circumstances of the world existing around us, that fandom might be otherwise without this.

Graham Darling, one of the more recently joined members of the NFFF, has been interviewed twice now, once for Ionisphere when he first joined and again for TNFF some time thereafter. Now, for the third time we are presenting an interview of him, the very best interview of him, one that really gets close in there.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW: GRAHAM J. DARLING by Heath Row



In the October Issue of The National Fantasy Fan, I profiled National Fantasy Fan Federation member Graham Darling, who writes sf, fantasy, and horror as Graham J. Darling. During the

profile process, Darling wrote thoughtful in-depth responses to my follow-up questions, but we didn't reconnect in time to include the material in *The Fan* before the editorial deadline. So I'm offering his responses in the form of an extended interview for readers of Ionisphere.

Darling is a sterling example of an sf, fantasy, and horror fan who's gone pro. A member of the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association, the Ottawa Science Fiction Society, and The N3F, as well as the Society for Creative Anachronism, he is an actfan and club member at one time involved in running cons—and more recently as a historical reenactor through the SCA. Having received an honorable mention in the 2017 N3F Short Story Contest and second prize in the 2018 contest, Darling has had a number of short stories published in periodicals such as **Dark Matter**, The N3F's own **Eldritch Science**, and **Metastellar**, as well as anthologies including Silvia Moreno-Garcia and Paula R. Stiles' *SWORD AND MYTHOS* and Robert J. Krog's *NO GREATER LOVE: MARTYRS OF EARTH AND ELSEWHERE*.

Having now sold enough work as a professional writer to qualify for higher levels of membership in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America and the Horror Writers Association, Darling has completed his first novel, *FALLEN WORLD*. Once he procures an agent and a publisher, Neffers are sure to find that book in better bookstores everywhere.

Our conversation explored how Darling's vocation formed his avocation—and new vocation, how he balances writing across three genres, and how his fandom activities relate to his professional work as a writer.

IO: What first attracted you to sf books and television in the mid-1960s?

GD: Science fiction was the norm back then. The world in those days was poised at the thresholds of both infinite expansion and utter destruction. 1957's Sputnik mission called to me in the womb, where fallout from H-bomb tests became part of my developing bones. A decade later, in the summer after **Star Trek's** first season, my dad was driving me every weekend from our home in Ottawa to Expo '67 in Montreal, the World's Fair where all the nations jostled to show how each would inherit the Earth. Much was going on in the politics of the day that really didn't touch us kids. We were already living in the future. And what with the Moon launches, along with the Native American legends and French-Canadian folktales that permeated our anthropological household—what other stories were there but those of Wonder?

IO: What role do you think wonder plays in sf, fantasy, and horror? Has that changed over time? (*i.e.*, is there less wonder now?)

GD: It seems clear that what we call "wonder" is the feeling that drives and rewards human learning and exploratory behavior, just as other feelings prompt hostility to a rival, escape from a threat, or making and raising a family. As G.K. Chesterton wrote in his 1908 "The Ethics of Elfland" (such as reprinted in Martin Gardner's 1957 *GREAT ESSAYS IN SCIENCE*):

"The elementary wonder, however, is not a mere fancy derived from the fairy tales; on the contrary, all the fire of the fairy tales is derived from this. Just as we all like love tales because there is an instinct of sex, we all like astonishing tales because they touch the nerve of the ancient instinct of astonishment. This is proved by

the fact that when we are very young children we do not need fairy tales—we only need tales. Mere life is interesting enough. A child of seven is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door and saw a dragon. But a child of three is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door. Boys like romantic tales, but babies like realistic tales—because they find them romantic.”

It follows, then, that as we each age, this thrust for wonder impels us to the boundaries of the familiar world, both as we experience it and as we imagine it, and so to enlarge it, and also, for the wise, to new ways of seeing the various parts and how they relate to each other, and so to solidify it, and also, for the brave, to apprehend its dark and dangerous bits, and so to defend against and redeem it. Speculative fiction may or may not directly provide such elsewhere: sf is weightlifting for the imagination.

I don't have any data for trends in what we all or singly think of Wonder, but I can think of two ways to get it wrong. One is to discount it as mere sentiment, to either disdain or exploit, or both. The other is, in essence, to worship it, to overly focus on the feeling at the expense of what it's for. Wonder properly leads to truth, but is not itself truth, nor a substitute for it—just as romantic love properly leads the lucky to an actual human being, and to a number of potential ones. Enjoy it, serve it, but let wonder do its work.

IO: You mentioned “consulting in polymer chemistry”—and you have a PhD; tell me a little about your career and current work. What drew you to chemistry?

GD: I was an utterly mad little scientist, full of Tom Swift and Doc Savage—I wanted to know everything, do everything, that Nature had to offer. When they asked me what I wanted to be, I'd answer “an atomic physicist and biochemist”, because that seemed to cover all the fields. By the time I entered a university, I'd narrowed that down to biochemistry and took a degree in that (and another in biology, not to leave that out), after having been offered a summer lab job by Jean Frechet, with whom I later went on to do my doctorate on functional polymers as tools for organic synthesis. But I think now I was always destined for organic and polymer chemistry, from the time as a toddler I opened every can of paint and goo in my dad's workshop and mixed them all together (I suppose I myself was the product of that experiment—classic alchemy, that idea).

After graduate studies, I did two years postdoctoral work at the IBM Research Center in Silicon Valley under Dr. Grant Wilson, with whom Prof. Frechet—and Dr. Hiroshi Ito—had co-invented the chemically amplified resists that ever since have made possible ever smaller and denser microcircuits, down to the present day. I then continued with both resists and functional polymers as a professor myself at McGill University, along with molecular imprinting, nonlinear optical materials and other good stuff. Then I moved to Creo in Vancouver Canada to apply my expertise to the printing industry, then back to the Ottawa area to continue as a consultant while applying to science fiction those ideas over the years that I couldn't quite swing into research grants (materializing ghosts inside Wilson cloud chambers, for instance, as featured in my recent “immaterial Witness” in **Dark Matter's** Halloween Special issue #2, October 2022).

IO: Do your professional science interests come into play in your writing? How so?

GD: One of the avowed goals of early science fiction was education, and as a (past) professional educator, I try to sneak some real science into my stories whenever I can. Especially chemistry, in which the genre is still sadly lacking, compared to physics and biology. So even my high/hard/dark fantasy novel *FALLEN WORLD* features *bareketh*, that's "lightning-struck black ore of iron" (a magnetite) and *nechosheth* "that rusts into gold" (*i.e.*, a gold-copper alloy of antiquity called Corinthian Brass). And I try not to mislead the reader about anything in the real world, including any historical or extant culture's myths and legends. After reading something of mine, I want people to know more, not less.

Also, there's nothing like a little science to spice up the horror. It's not so easy to pretend then that the monster isn't real.

Now, I know there are some who can't stand any mixing of genres—"Euww, there's science in my fantasy, history in my mystery, religion in my romance"—and peace be upon them. I also appreciate that stores want to know what shelf to put a book on (but why not more than one shelf? Why not a book that could go on *all* of the shelves? Perhaps one day I'll write it). But I reply that everything we know or guess or dream is all one story, and any one thing is just a piece or a glimpse of it. And that some especially attractive views of a house will show more than one wall at once.

IO: Tell me more about the educational role sf can play.

GD: One of my favorite science fiction films is *THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT* from 1951, starring Alec Guinness as a mild-mannered inventor 26 years before he was swinging a lightsaber as Obi-Wan Kenobi. Not just because the science in it is chemistry, which—again—is rare enough (and synthetic organic polymer chemistry, to boot, which is my own specialty), and not just because it accurately depicts the science of the day, right down to the hazards of pipetting by mouth, and not just for (probably) deriving from fellow Canadian author Stephen Leacock's equally thought-provoking 1911 story "The Man in Asbestos", and not just for prophesying today's real-life ignite-in-air organometallic catalysts that make bullet-proof/stain-proof HMPE (high-modulus polyethylene, alas, so far not the industry-disruptor that Guinness depicted, but wait till the fashion catches on), but for showcasing people who are passionate about exploring the natural world to benefit the human one, thereby inviting Romance and driving plot. Just the thing to prompt starry-eyed youngsters everywhere to hit the books.

Documented examples of scientists who were inspired by science fiction in their youth: primatologist Jane Goodall by Hugh Lofting's animal talker Dr. Dolittle; helicopter inventor Igor Sikorsky by Jules Verne's *THE CLIPPER OF THE CLOUDS*; rocket scientist Robert H. Goddard by H.G. Wells' *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*.

IO: Why do you think some readers are averse to mixing genres? Are editors or publishers averse to it?

GD: Even for those not actually allergic to one of the ingredients in the stew, some readers

might suspend their disbelief in a different way for science fiction as for fantasy, *etc.*, and might feel wrenched at discovering the book in their hands is morphing into Something Else, as I understand some felt about Tanith Lee's not-sword-and-sorcery-after-all 1975 book *THE BIRTHGRAVE*. On the other hand, some might enjoy a good wrench from time to time. Some scientists might even live for it.

Regardless of whether a publisher might enjoy a mixed-genre work, I understand and sympathize on how it might be harder to market. But my first job must remain, as an artist, to craft wonderful things—let others agonize over what to call them.

IO: You also grow radishes. Only radishes? Do you garden at home?

GD: Yes, I have a half-acre to work with. Radishes are long done, though some I've flaked and dried to put by for the winter. Same with three breeds of heirloom peas. My two kinds of pole beans, I planted too late to harvest them dry, but I'm eating my way through their refrigerated shell forms and those are tasty enough. The pumpkins failed, and likely the corn will, but every day I eat kale almost off the bushes. This is my first year and I hope to later do more and better with what I've learned—same as with writing, I suppose.

IO: How did you become a writer?

GD: It was something to do with all these ideas that come while washing lab glassware, or lying or starting awake at night. And I think I mentioned grant applications, which aren't that much different, in a sense, and the same with patent applications and journal articles: everything is Story. But also what a lot of others have said: to give back or pay forward something of what I've enjoyed so much myself. Anyway, my profession right now is pretty specialized, and writing fiction gives me something to do between gigs. Plus I think I can be good at it, and I suspect my uncommon background might send me off in rare directions that some readers might find a taste for. We'll see.

IO: How did story come into play in your work as a scientist? How does it connect with education?

GD: To contemplate an animal or plant—or ecosystem or human culture—is a useful exercise for a materials guy like me, or for any other kind of scientist or engineer, because every persistent part is wonderfully functional in a living thing, is only there for a reason—namely, to help with its survival and that of its descendants. That's the essence of this-happens-because-that-happened Plot, which human attention is built to be drawn to: the trail tale that tells of the prey or enemy that has passed this way, to the one who's learned to read it. So when I needed a membrane to microencapsulate living cells in bioreactors, I considered chitin, which is how arthropods and fungi hold themselves together. And the rest is (well, a rather tiny part of a rather specialized branch of natural) history.

I often spiced up my lectures with stories of how this or that substance or reaction was discovered, and the impact that had on people's lives. Because neos often need "human interest" before they've matured to love natural phenomena for themselves; though I'll concede that humans and human history are also natural phenomena as deserving of love and

study as any other.

IO: I'm intrigued by your having a hand in all these genres—and appreciate your crystalline descriptions: “diamond-hard sf, mythopoetic fantasy, and eldritch horror”. How did you settle on that approach to writing, and how would you say your output breaks down in terms of a ratio?

GD: Much of my sf is very dark or apocalyptic—that's not just a marketing strategy, nor is it that nightmares come naturally to me (yet they do seem to, though I'm such a nice guy), but I honestly hope that dredging these into the light can help to warn away individuals or humanity, as has done many another cautionary tale (Like George Orwell's NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR), or that by merely upsetting the reader, to provoke thought in general. But of course, they're no good at that if they're no good as stories in the first place.

Let's look at a few:

“Jon Carver of Barzoom, You Misunderstood”. That was an Edgar Rice Burroughs-style science fantasy/planetary romance for a heroic fantasy/Lovecraftian horror anthology co-edited by Silvia Moreno-Garcia. It helped a friend of mine persuade her husband to have kids. It's been reprinted nineteen times to date, including in Sweden, India and Nigeria.

“The Queer”, a young adult dark urban fantasy whose protagonist is a different kind of different, modernized from the medieval Legenda Aurea.

“A Pleasant Walk, a Pleasant Talk”: genial hard sf inspired by “The Walrus and the Carpenter” from Lewis Carroll's ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. Another friend of mine said of the final line that he felt he'd been punched in the gut.

“The New Season”: very sciencey and blackly humorous post-apocalypse and political thriller that begins, “With COVID-34, the spots were purple.”

“The Eternity Machine”. Gothic hard sf where everyone dies, but dies well.

“Immaterial Witness”: hard sf/fantasy/horror/courtroom drama that made **Dark Matter** magazine's 2022 Halloween special issue, free online at <https://fiction.grahamjdarling.com>.

IO: Your Web Site indicates you're a member of SF Canada, the SFWA, and the HWA—what have your experiences with those organizations been like?

GD: SF Canada has been very sociable and supportive—I know many there personally from my time at clubs and conventions. But I suspect my recent upgrade to a full member of the SFWA and an active pro writer in the HWA will have more clout in the U.S. market as I look for an agent and publisher there for my debut novel **FALLEN WORLD**, now complete, with others in the pipeline.

IO: What was the process like to qualify as a professional at the SFWA and the HWA? Any curve balls or surprises along the way?

GD: Basically, I wrote stories, got paid for them, and eventually showed the proof to this or that professional organization. Partway through, the rules changed for SFWA, which let me add my report sales and still achieve Full Member status all the sooner with short stories alone; the HWA still only counts minimum six cents per word, but that's OK too; both

incentivize authors to write more, and to seek more for what they write.

IO: How did you first get involved in fandom? What attracted you? What are the Montreal Science Fiction & Fantasy Association and the Ottawa Science Fiction Society like? What do the groups do?

GD: I joined OSFS in high school for the meetings, and eventually graduated into helping to run science fiction conventions. I did the same later on with MonSFFA. Unfortunately, with me being in Vancouver, I haven't been able to attend the meetings of those in some time, but those have now morphed into Zooms. MonSFFA's meetings are especially impressive, each one containing multiple presentations of quality and quantity worthy of a small convention.

IO: Do other pros participate in MonSFFA and OSFS? How so?

GD: I remember fantasy author Charles Saunders at OSFS meetings in the 1970s and early 1980s. In IMARO and its sequels, the hero faced savage beasts, wicked humans, and demonic forces in a mythic version of Africa. One reason I submitted "Jon Carver of Barzoom, You Misunderstood" to **Sword and Mythos**, where it became my first published story, was that I heard Charles would be a contributor—I'm sorry that fell through, and that he's since passed away.

IO: Your story that appeared in Silvia Moreno Garcia and Paula R. Stiles' **SWORD & MYTHOS** and the N3F's **Eldritch Science**, "Jon Carver of Barzoom, You Misunderstood," has been pretty widely reprinted—almost twenty times since its initial publication in 2014. Are many markets open to reprints? What role do reprints play if you work as a writer?

GD: The Submission Grinder lists about two hundred arguably genre titles that take reprints of one length or another, including a half dozen "Best of the Year" anthologies that most first-rights publishers will allow within the exclusivity periods of their contracts. The pay is typically about a tenth what it is for first publication, but I figure that's still something, plus it gets my name before more readers—including in other countries and even other languages, or who are fans of other genres, or otherwise excusably unaware of the original venue—who might learn to like my stuff and start looking for it. It also lets me keep submitting even while I'm working on longer pieces like my finished novel **FALLEN WORLD** and novel-in-progress **DEREK, DRAGON OF TOMORROW**.

I especially sent "Jon Carver" around because it seems to fit anywhere—science fiction, fantasy, horror, romance, and many combinations and sub-categories thereof.

IO: How did you become involved in the SCA?

GD: I attended a Society for Creative Anachronism event in Ottawa while a student, then remembered the SCA after attending a medieval-themed banquet by another group near Vancouver. I thought this would be a good chance to research real medieval life and technology for my fantasy works, and it really was, as can be seen throughout **Fallen World**. And I greatly enjoyed the camping and the opportunities to learn, lecture, and exhibit on historical science and engineering. For instance, following an alchemical text, I was able to produce the Universal Solvent (nitric and hydrochloric acids, called Aqua Regia, that dissolved

even gold, and with further fluorite, would've dissolved the glass as well!), the Philosopher's Stone (an ether extract of the previous solution, which turned a nickel into a gold piece—albeit only on the outside) and the Elixir of Life (the same into a glass of gin with a twist of lime, that made a clear purple solution of nanogold able to be absorbed by the body, unfortunately without the immortalizing effects predicted by the theory of the day), all under an open-walled tent—and before royalty, no less.

IO: Thank you for the wide-ranging conversation, Graham! I appreciate your involvement in the N3F and look forward to exploring your writing—as well as your forthcoming work.

GD: I've enjoyed this, too. Thanks for your interest. I'll see you in the pages of the clubzines!

The interview with Graham Darling reveals a real person, highly imaginative and genuinely a part of fandom with a lot of influence there.

Foo Foo



On a Pale Horse by Tiffany Gray

FAN GROUP LEADER INTERVIEW: JOHN GRAYSHAW by John Thiel

John Grayshaw is the administrator of the Facebook group SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB. He maintains an active and interesting group with a large membership and constant goings-on. People interested in discussing science fiction books find a place for it in his group. There are controversies and scholastic opinions and reminders of books in circulation and books of the past. It gives the viewer perhaps a wider perspective of the field.



IO: How long have you been managing the group? Are you one of its originators?

JG: Yes, I am the creator of the group. I created it July 6th of 2010. At the time I was running a book club on Yahoo Groups. We had a really loyal/intimate but small group of members and I thought to myself Facebook has a lot of members, maybe some of them would like to join the Yahoo Group. Well, no one ever wanted to join the Yahoo Group, but people joined the Facebook Group, that's for sure! When the group hit 1,000 members in 2015 it was like a wake-up call. I started to focus on the group more. I started to regulate promotional posts and political posts, which set us apart from many other Facebook groups where anything goes. I started a monthly group read discussion. And the rest is history as they say. We currently have 9,400 members, have two monthly Group Reads (a Classic and a Modern), and a weekly short fiction read. And we have conducted 90 Q and A interviews with science fiction authors, as well as biographers, historians, and other experts.

IO: How long has the club been on the net?

JG: As I said it's been around since 2010 though the period of rapid growth started in 2015.

IO: Ha Ha, stupid of me to have asked twice, but perhaps this needed verification. Do you have

any connection with the commercial distributors of that name? Have you ever heard from them about the club?

JG: No, people join the group from time to time thinking we have something to do with them. I definitely think part of the reason the group has been so successful is that the name: Science Fiction Book Club, is very general, so if you are interested in a group discussing science fiction literature we are easy to find. We have members in all fifty states and sixty-four countries around the world.

IO: The SFBC used to have a website in which there were discussions of books, but it collapsed or something, I think because it was too lock & key, and the management was so stand-offish. It can still be found by net research, strictly commercial, selling the latest books at the latest prices. No more good deals, no further resemblance to being a club. At one time they had representatives at conventions.

I am one of the people who was sometimes posting at your club. When I inquired then if it represented the commercial book club I found it did not and so didn't join it, but it seemed interesting. At that time it seemed to me to sound a bit secular. Lately I have found it to have livened up considerably by my standards.

Were there any technical or other difficulties with establishing and maintaining the club?

JG: No, it's one of those rare things in life that has always been very easy. People just continue to find us. We get like twenty or thirty new members a week. And days that we get even more members I start to ask where people heard about us and the answer is usually that someone in another group posted a question asking "What's a good science fiction group?" and one of our members recommended us.

But as the group gets larger and larger it is more and more work to watch every thread and welcome every new member, and run all the Group Reads. And that is why I have a team of moderators. I currently have five moderators and I certainly couldn't do it without them.

IO: I invited two moderators to join me in my Facebook Group, SF FANDOM, and lost track of them. Whether they are doing a lot of group work I don't know. It seems they were involved with people and are more with them than with me. I appointed them to deal with individual members and they are probably doing that, but it is not reported back. They've been making themselves visible from time to time recently, showing what they are into.

Were there any ups and downs with the club over the years which you would care to describe? Have you had any rewarding experiences with it?

JG: It's always going up. "All good things, all good things." I think the most rewarding thing is the friendships with different members that I've developed over the year. The moderators have a PM thread where we are supposed to talk about the board but half the time we just talk about what's going on in our lives.

And the other neat thing is that I've gotten to talk to so many authors that I admire because we've done so many Q and As. I mean I talked to Samuel Delaney and he said something like "Do people still read my books?" and I was like "Yes, you're a legend!" and I talked to Larry

Niven and I tried to ask him a light-hearted question about the Kzinti being used in Star Trek, but he didn't really find it funny and just said something like "I'm not aware of them using them anytime soon". Well, it was just a few years later that Lower Decks started using them again. I got to talk to Lois McMaster Bujold and tell her how much I loved the Vorkosigan Saga. And I asked her if you should read "Shard of Honor" or "The Warrior's Apprentice" first and she said to "Read 'Shards of Honor' first unless you are allergic to Romance". And I got to talk to Connie Willis about her love of Christmas as well as her love of Screwball Comedies.

IO: Do you look over the other SF Facebook sites? Do you interact with any of them?

JG: I started a second group during COVID called Star Trek Rewatch Group where we watch an episode of a Star Trek series every other day and discuss it.

I do have a close relationship with several science fiction groups. A member of SFBC started a Portuguese language science fiction group that has been very popular. The guy that started SFBC with me, Jim Harris, helps run a science fiction book group. And a former member of the SFBC started his own Science Fiction book group and over the years I've been in touch with some of the moderators there.

I know there are some sci-fi groups out there that take an anything goes attitude towards promotional posts and I think that makes the groups into one advertisement after another and I don't understand why anyone is in those groups other than the promoters themselves.

IO: Any experiences with the club over the course of time that you would like to describe?

JG: I mean it's a magical place. Where else can you scroll through comments on a thread and see one from Robert J. Sawyer and then another from David Gerrold?

There is just so much collective knowledge about science fiction in the group. A common thing that happens is someone will post a thread that starts with "I can't remember the name of this science fiction story. I read it years ago." And then they'll proceed to describe it. And nine times out of ten we can tell them exactly what it is instantly.

It's just been such a great journey to see the club continue to grow.

Unfortunately, we've had some great members pass away over the years. But we'll never forget them and their wonderful personalities and contributions.

IO: Are you connected with a library or other establishment, or are there any other organizations you are connected with?

JG: Yes, I am the Library Director of the Middletown Public Library in Middletown, Pennsylvania. And the SFBC has been associated with the library for several years so that despite being online the SFBC is considered the same as an in-person book club.

IO: Do you get a lot of satisfaction out of managing the club?

JG: Yeah, I mean my wife jokes with me that "only you could turn your hobby into part of your day job". I joined the Yahoo Group I mentioned earlier around when I was a freshman in college in 2000. So, I was reading and discussing science fiction online even before I decided to become a librarian. It's just always been a passion of mine.

And it's a good excuse for me to have a very large collection of science fiction books. I tell my wife, "Hey, you never know which ones we're going to read next!"

IO: What would you like to say at large about the club? (Promotion included if you would like to do some.)

JG: It's a fun and upbeat place where folks from all around the world that love science fiction literature come together to discuss it.

IO: It may be the N3F is one of the places you could associate your group with. For communication there's an N3F Facebook page which does not require being in the N3F to view and comment upon it.

He's Still With Us—photos of Jeffrey Redmond

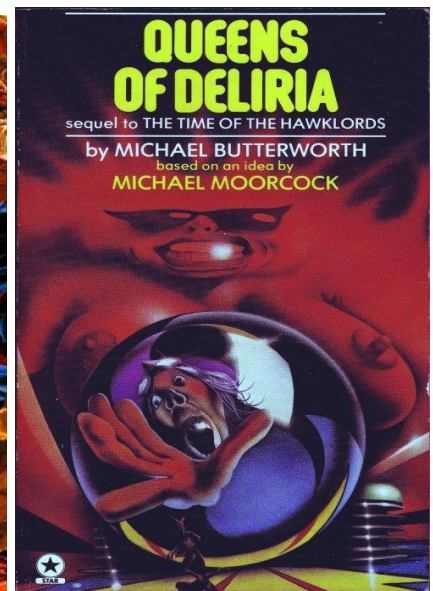
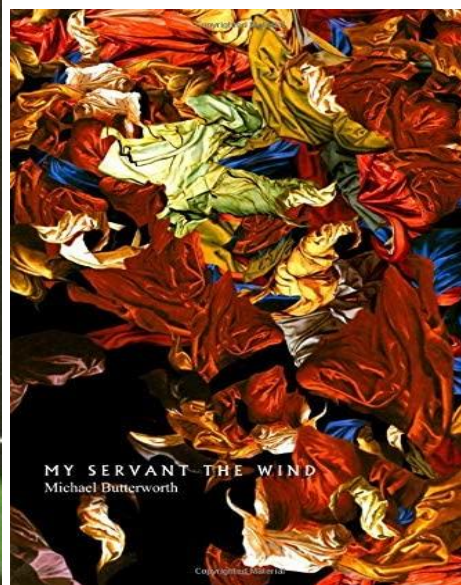
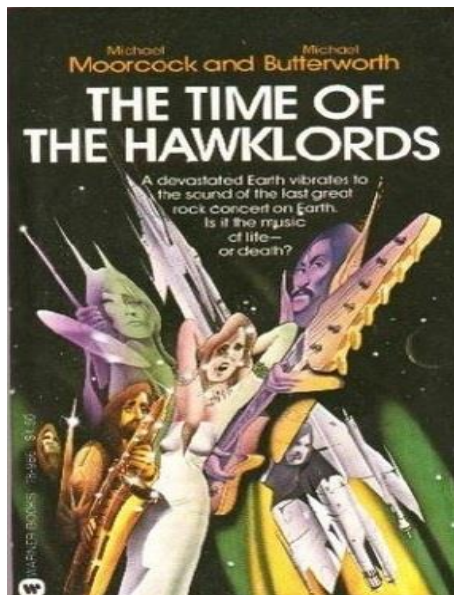
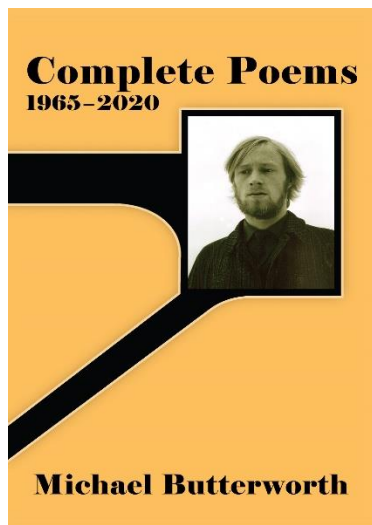
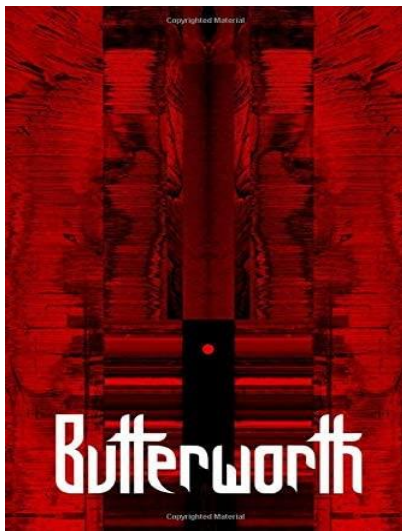


Here's some photos of our "Behind the Scenes" columnist and where he lives, which is abrogated by his extended semi-departure. We will maintain that he is a good man, and a look at the photo of him shows a friendly man from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Perhaps the second photo shows the rough life which exists around him, which I was mentioning in my editorial.

Get to know us, folks, and perhaps we would get along better.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW: MICHAEL BUTTERWORTH by **Jean-Paul L. Garnier**





JPG: How and when did you get into writing science fiction short stories and speculative poetry?

MB: I began writing SF at around the age of fourteen. Two short stories were published in the school magazine. By lucky happenstance, this was edited by Charles Platt, another pupil at the school, and when he fell in with Michael Moorcock after we left school, he introduced my work there. By another stroke of good fortune, Mike had just taken over the reins of **New Worlds** from John Carnell, embarking on a crusade to publish the new writing that he and Jimmy Ballard were calling for, to be known as the New Wave of SF. My first professional sale, GIRL, about the sexual act between the last two humans, both men, in a post atomic landscape, appeared in the magazine in May 1966. I was at the age of nineteen. My first poem wasn't speculative and was written at school in anger at a teacher, a sneak who used sly means to catch me smoking. My fiction is speculative, but my poetry is a mixture. I regard myself primarily as a poet, and a lot of my fiction is essentially prose-poetry. When I write pieces, in my head they are poems, to which I try to fit narratives.

JPG: What led you to writing the Hawkwind science fiction books, and what was it like adapting a band into fiction?

MB: I was a single parent with two young children to raise, and I was looking for work I could do from home. I touted around, and when I came to ask Mike Moorcock if he had any work going, thinking I would get a few commercial leads, he offered me the Hawklords books to write. It was yet another stroke of luck because I caught him at a time when he had over-committed himself with commissions and he saw how we could help each other. It was an extraordinarily generous gesture, because he also allowed me to use my name alongside his on the first book of the series, *THE TIME OF THE HAWKLORDS*, and, crucially to me in my situation, allowed me to keep the advances. I was introduced to his editor at Star Books, Piers Dudgeon, and this led to me also being offering the six *SPACE 1999* novelizations. I spent almost two years writing the books, and the money they earned was a massive help while the kids were growing up.

The first thing I had to contend with about Hawkwind was that, in the late seventies when I wrote the books, the band had no distinct leader. Hawkwind is like a tribe. All the members are heroes and heroines. Even past members of the band have mythic status, and I had to ensure that everyone was given equal billing in the storyline. Strangely, I think my piano experience, in the sense of being used to do two different things at once with my hands, having musical experience of my own, helped me keep track of so many varied characters. Mike's involvement in the books was minimal, but what there was of it was invaluable. He knew the band better than I and went through the MS after I'd finished, checking everything for me, and he added flourishes to the opening pages. I think some of the fictional names for the characters and guitars are his.

JPG: How did you come to write the three *SPACE 1999* novels and what was the process like?

MB: These were novelizations, not novels, and the process was different. The heavy-lifting had been done by the scriptwriters, so the only plotting I had to do, the only speech I had to create, was the over-arching plots I introduced to tie the episodes together to provide novel-length reading experiences. There were four episodes to a book. It wasn't in my brief to invent meta-plots, but I wanted to, and once I'd decided on these it was a case of filling in on the bare scripts with description, but in terms of execution, the job was a baptism of fire. The books had to tie in with the television broadcasts, and the productions had overrun, leaving little time for anything like pre-publication revision. I think that's why I had been given the job—a writer given the opportunity to break into the market will take on anything, right? I wrote six books in five months, including *QUEENS OF DELIRIA*, the second Hawklords novel. To help me at the beginning I sub-contracted the second *SPACE 1999* book, *MINDBREAKS OF SPACE*, to my friend Jay Jeff Jones, while I wrote *PLANETS OF PERIL* and *QUEENS OF DELIRIA*, then wrote the remaining four books myself. Due to the haste everyone was in, I had been given draft shooting scripts, so some of the characters and their names had changed by the time the programs were aired. To further compound matters the scripts had been given to me in no

particular order, so the stories in the books didn't always match what was being screened. I learned this only years later when Mateo Latosa of Powys Books commissioned me to re-write the books in broadcast order and with the right characters doing the right things. It was no mean feat, unstitching the meta-plots and re-stitching them in their new form. I also had to novelize a script that got left out of the original book due to it falling outside the four-episodes-to-a-book arrangement. The Powys edition appeared as an omnibus in 2006. It had more words than Homer's ODYSSEY. The writing of it felt like it too.

JPG: You also wrote a book about the band NEW ORDER. How did this process differ from writing fiction, and can you explain the connection between music and the New Wave of science fiction?

MB: It was a lot less scary than writing my first novel. With a long work of fiction, you must invent your way to the end, and it can at times feel like laying a road in a dense fog. Where is it going? You don't know until you get there. For a beginner with a deadline, it was occasionally a terrifying process. With non-fiction, a story already exists, at least in theory, so you are immediately on better ground. When it came to THE BLUE MONDAY DIARIES, I had a big advantage in that years previously when New Order were recording POWER, CORRUPTION AND LIES and their single "Blue Monday", I had been invited to keep a hand-written diary of the recordings. The diary comprises the central portion of my book and required little attention other than for me to type it out and re-edit it. To work as a book, though, it required being put into context, and I wrote several chapters of commentary, in one of which I hypothesized whether the new work I'd heard being recorded, in particular "Blue Monday", could be seen as being New Wave. It's a personal conjecture of my own, but the eighties, when "Blue Monday" appeared, saw William Gibson in the US and Alan Moore over here launch, respectively, NEUROMANCER and WATCHMEN, and looking back on what I'd seen and heard being created in the studio it felt like New Order, and their genesis as Joy Division were also in the Vanguard of this "second wave" of the new SF breaking in the eighties.

Annihilation, technology, the media landscape, experimentation, the inner landscape, the main ingredients of the New Wave are all present in Joy Division and then in New Order, in differing ways. Three of the original band, Ian Curtis, Peter Hook and Steve Morris were big into SF and the New Wave in particular—Moorcock, Ballard, Burroughs, particularly Burroughs in Ian's case. Music peers like the Human League, who were Philip K. Dick and Moorcock fans, used the idea of the multiverse in their songs to envision alternate pasts leading to haunting futures. In the case of "Blue Monday", the title came from Kurt Vonnegut's BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS, which Steve was reading at the time. On the side of an illustration of a nuclear bomb that looks a lot like "Fat Man", the device detonated over Nagasaki, he found the words "Goodbye Blue Monday". In the studio I also noticed that the band used a process of cut-up to write the lyrics, which was reminiscent of William Burroughs.

Most significant for me was the music. We had grown up in the industrial dereliction of the north of England, the wreckage of which had first inspired me to write. It was still in evidence

everywhere in Manchester, my birth city, and the city where Joy Division started. The empty mills, abandoned canals, rat-infested ruins, smoke-blackened buildings and the more recent bomb damage of WWII evidenced in the “crofts” where buildings had once stood, made it feel like a science fiction landscape. This was very strongly reflected in their music, and the process by which they re-found direction after the shock of Ian’s death, emerging from this northern darkness into the sunniness of the new dance music coming from America, also struck me as science fictional, like a brilliant bloom emerging from a deathly bough. The band’s mode of operation, playing with new equipment, experimenting, finding new sounds, was another clue, reminding me of another arguably “New Wave” band, one with which I was already familiar, Hawkwind.

JPG: Tell me about the diarest approach to writing books and how you employed this in your novel MY SERVANT THE WIND.

MB: MY SERVANT THE WIND is different again, finding inspiration from my days at New Worlds, and the acme, in a way, of my habit of collaging texts. For this book I went back to my 1971 writing notebooks and set myself the challenge of making a book out of a series of abortive “starts” on a novel I had once made. MY SERVANT THE WIND is really the novel I should have written then and was trying to write but didn’t know how to. In this respect it is like THE BLUE MONDAY DIARIES because the basis for that was another text—the diary I had made—that I didn’t know how to use until other ideas came to me, years later. As an aside, with me, this delay in knowing what to do with something I have written can be part of the writing process, and it is the reason why I never discard anything. The one time I did throw something away, in a fit of frustration because editors were telling me the work I destroyed was too long. I have regretted it ever since. MY SERVANT THE WIND is a complicated arrangement, taking in the same narrator at three different points in time—1971, when atomic war started, the present moment, *i.e.* me writing at my desk now, and 2030, when Earth resembles the Martian landscape. In 1973, a Teletype from the North American Aerospace Command (NORAD), HAD in real life mistakenly announced that war had started. It was corrected in time, but what if it hadn’t been? The narrator is a fictionalized self, a young man in 1971, an older man in 2030 and a “mediator” in the present—the self that is writing the novel. My notebooks are like diaries—entries of thoughts, imaginings and observation. I call them collectively “The Cosmic Diary”, so MY SERVANT THE WIND is composed of entries from these, other entries composed in the “present”, and some entries by other hands entirely. I used anything that came my way that seemed to deepen the novel, or that moved the narrator along.

JPG: In your opinion, what is the greatest impact the New Wave movement had on the science fiction of today?

MB: In the very short term, relief. That’s the sentiment I thought was being felt by many at the time in the UK. Relief that it was all over, and the field could go back to rockets, aliens, and far distant futures. Publishers were glad to move back to something they knew how to market—

and many readers agreed. Possibly in the bigger US markets extremes of experimentation with the genre were less felt. I don't know. Although I bemoaned it at the time, the return of the spaceships was a necessary development, and in terms of the longer term impact the New Wave had on SF, it broadened it. Mike Harrison's *LIGHT* is a good example of this, a space opera I read back-to-back with Gaston Bachelard's *THE POETICS OF SPACE*. In a weird way, the two books seemed to be speaking to one another. Such realism in SF would have been difficult to find prior to 1964, when Mike used the first edition of *New Worlds* to pointedly introduce William Burroughs to an unsuspecting SF world.

JBG: Your short fiction collection *BUTTERWORTH* contains stories spanning decades. What themes have remained important to you and how has your perception of the work changed?

MB: *BUTTERWORTH* collects my New Wave-related short work from *New Worlds* and other magazines together with the work I was doing in the eighties at Savoy Books, as well as some more recent writing. My work for *New Worlds* hadn't been collected, which bothered me for decades, and the collection was intended to remedy this. It was meant to make a statement, to stand as a monolith even. This is what I have been doing all my life. The themes that are important to me are all in evidence in this collection—environmental collapse, war, over-consumption, the reluctance we have to put on the brakes sufficiently and to really do what's needed. They are the themes I had at the beginning, and they are the ones that still matter now because, if anything, they are even more pressing. My perception of the work is also the same, though as I've got older I am trying to say more positive things. One of the characteristics of the New Wave is that it was anti-technology, but mostly I wasn't. It was the use that technology was being put to that I was criticizing.

JPG: In your long career in science fiction what has changed the most about the genre for better and for worse?

MB: I think the way it can be appropriated to say many different things and represent so many varied voices and be a cause for the good and the different. We must get off this planet, that's for sure, but we must mind how we do this, and take care of it and the people and animals that live on it. Science fiction has become like the manual media for doing this. Although it's got its spaceships back, it's no longer just about them. You can say its most pressing concerns are about what's happening now, what's going wrong now, what we need to do to put it right. Writing about the present or the near future instead of the far future was the main definition of speculative fiction before it broadened out to have so many different meanings.

JPG: Your most recent book *COMPLETE POEMS 1965-2020* has just been released. Will you continue to write poetry, and if so, what is there in store for the post-complete era?

MB: I am still writing poetry but have no plans yet as to a future book. It may just be another collection. I would like to write a long work, or one tied together with a theme, but have no idea yet what about.

JPG: You are working on a follow-up to *MY SERVANT THE WIND*. Can you tell us about this project?

MB: The montage structure of MY SERVANT THE WIND meant it always had the potential for further development. When I was writing it, I had to decide when a satisfying balance between narrative completeness and what I wanted to say had been reached. When I achieved this, that became the “end” of the book. But I always knew I might return to it. The new book was started as a continuation of one of MY SERVANT THE WIND’s components. Unlike its parent, it has a linear structure and may become a short novel. It is called WITHERSOEVER and is the episodic journey by an amnesiac narrator through an apocalyptic landscape accompanied by an apparent simpleton sidekick, Scrat, the nature of whom he knows as little about as himself....

Mr. Butterworth can be found on the net at <https://michael-butterworth.co.uk/>



Convention poster for a relatively recent Chicago-based convention

LOOKING OVER THIS ISSUE by John Thiel



As readers of IO might know by now, I like to finish off an issue with commentary, to replace the commentary we should be getting from readers. Hey, this may be the only zine that doesn't bounce letters of comment. Write what you will is the policy here. The comments we've gotten in the past said just anything the commentators wanted to, and were printed intact. As a reader, I'd look on that as a bona fide opportunity to say hello.

I don't know if readers would comment, if they were doing so, on the interview with Graham Darling, as he seems to come in from all directions and know many things, some of which he reveals during the interview. Why not try him out, though?—he seems to be waiting for responses. I've seen people like him, always ready to talk.

But that's talking about him, not the interview. I liked his discussion of the highly imaginative element of science fiction, and the sense of wonder science fiction should inspire. Too much of this has gone out of science fiction, and that's not a line of buyers looking for what's latest on the book and magazine racks you see today, that's a police lineup signifying a bust of the shop peddling what's latest, which seems like illegal publishing to them. That's not the kind of wonder Darling is looking for, wondering what people are up to. How many of you readers recognize the sense of wonder that had been found in the reading of science fiction? It's brought about by imaginative plotting. I used to hear a lot of discussions of the feeling of wonder among fans. Why not such discussions now?

As you can see, this writer has brought up things to comment about and has got me making some comments from my own perspective. That's what talking about sf is about.

Similarly, there is much to say about the interview with John Grayshaw. Is he not indeed an active man? He takes great interest in what he is doing and is backing it with a considerable reading of science fiction. He has the spirit of literary interchange and development and it is nice to see a person who is spirited about science fiction. His site is genuinely contributory to the furtherance and development of science fiction. It might be nice to do some things the way he is doing them. He does keep his members active. Are any of you going over to try out his site? There's a lot there of interest. A fan extraordinaire.

Michael Butterworth has been around quite a bit and is clearly a very learned person with a literary style suited to the genre and the literary world at large, and thence to the world at large. He is really into the business of writing, not just a dilettante. He's been there and sees things and tells them to YOU. He tells it like it is, too, and I think raises many argumentative topics. For instance, the New Wave. I heard of this New Wave for the first time when I was in college, and a professor teaching

science fiction more or less started off his course making reference to a New Wave in science fiction which seemed to be replacing the earlier writing. I had felt some of those changes myself. I don't think the New Wave was such a good thing. It was letting in beatniks and anarchists and generally antisocial types more than anything else. Science fiction has been PRO-social although highly critical of society, but the point of the writings has been that good society is a good thing and if it goes astray, better order and intelligence should be restored. The New Wave was full of people doing damage and proposing nightmares as a way of life simply because they were different and more like the way a lot of people were, the philosophy of Frank Zappa. Change, they felt, should be violent and inexplicable. This was taking science fiction, or any form of literature for that matter, up the wrong street. They used scientific results without comprehending the science that went into them. This was more a public reaction than well-thought-out literature. They were chasing what's good out along with what's disturbing about the present social setup. The 1970s, and it seems we are still wallowing around in that sort of thing now. At least the more well-thought-out science fiction formulates this as war.

Anyone consider THAT an interesting discussion? Outside of that class I mentioned, I haven't seen that new wave being discussed or anything but mentioned to this present day, except for high appreciation for the carnage and inhumanity it brought.

When I was in the N3F in earlier days, that was the sort of thing we would discuss. Have some nihilists brought "thinking does no one any good" into our midst?



NATURAL TALENT



THE RUNNER IN THE DARK by John Polselli

**The runner in the dark had disappeared
Alone beneath a line of maples there
While stars were shining in the stratosphere.**

**Every friend deceased had reappeared
Out from the shadows hovering in air.
The runner in the dark had disappeared**

**Within a lightless doorway that I feared.
Dreaming of the demons in despair
While stars were shining in the stratosphere,**

**I saw the surging ocean which had steered
Upon the gleaming seacoast. Unaware,
The runner in the dark had disappeared**

**Into a star whose light had disappeared
Against an endless night at which I stared
While stars were shining in the stratosphere.**

**The golden hair of daybreak reappeared.
Starlight faded as the flush of morning glared.
The runner in the dark had disappeared
While stars were shining in the stratosphere.**

BLACK AS NIGHT by Joanne Tolson

In the night sky
The moon most prominent shines
In the blackest sky
Planets shine the brightest.



UNINVITED GUESTS by John Frances Haines

Mars Base was minding its own business
When the visitors came. Base kept calm
And put it out live so we could all watch
Open-mouthed as history was made
(We could not help if things went wrong).
A brief visit—after departure
And Mars Base back to normal,
The world went mad. “Are you OK?”
We asked. “Yes, fine,” they said, which seemed
Quite strange, as we were traumatized.
Repeatedly, we watched the films
But could not find the cause of unease.
Distance gave safety—for which, we were glad.

AFTERGLOW, by John Polselli

**The engine of dusk
idles in my room
where love shakes hands
with moonlight
as the sea,
reverberating
with sharks
moves
forth
toward the web of
creation
where I stand
an orb of
endless
firelight.**

THE AGENTS by Cardinal Cox

Literary agents have correction fluid
In a concealed pocket of their tweed jackets
Since the age when bards were instructed by druids
They understand the power of verbal packets

Or is it a sonic wave form? Logos—the word
Stand against alien virus of addiction
Uninfected people count for less than a third
For the inoculation is via fiction

Higher dimensions and quantum entanglement
Driving hosts to buy, buy more, consume and hoard
Going far beyond the point resources are spent
Then the infected resort to theft or to fraud

Agents edit novels into a difference
Brandishing obscure bade, they earn their percents

I WILL MISS by Betty Streeter

Imaging not being here

What I used to do

I will no longer do

When time is up

So is work

Imaging not being here

Sure I will miss

It

Imaging will be a whole

New world.

Only it will one day

be somewhere

else.



issue's end