



A publication of the National Fantasy Fan Federation  
History and Research Bureau

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Origin is a monthly publication devoted to the history and researching of science fiction, fantasy, and those associated with these fields, and to science fiction fandom. We aim to please the reader.

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# EDITORIAL



## O Dreamer, Awake!

What is, in fact, going on in the world around us? Should we not take care of our problems with the “real world” (a statement that implies that as readers belonging to a literary society we are “living” in a world of illusion) before we embark upon what may be called leisure time activity? [Note: I haven’t heard anyone calling fan matters leisure time activity lately.] [But I’m referring to when we first started up; “joined”, not ‘joined up’.] These problems we have living under such conditions as are prevailing in the present-day world certainly need our attention, and if we can’t deal with them, that needs our attention. No, we don’t need to help solve world problems, as we see many people trying to do; what we need to do is look over what constitutes our own problems of various sorts and find what can be done about them. You don’t find the answers to such problems in books.

Regarding whether book readers are living in a world of illusion, we might be if we regard those books as being reality, but we are speaking here of fiction. However, I see a lot of people on the net reacting to them as if they constituted a reality. Science fiction and detective books comment on reality but do not claim to be creating a reality; I think people are getting fanatical about what they have read and are using books such as Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty Four as a belief system. Westerns, on the other hand, seem to transcribe life in a fictional form and deal directly with actual problems. Their readers don’t believe in what they read but, rather, live what they read. They compare their experiences with ones in the book. Presently and for some time literary concerns have been discussing science fiction, westerns, and mysteries as related literature, and the result has been a mingling of them. The N3F has been for a long time concerned with how sf relates to other literature, and it has rendered discussion of books rather ambiguous.

Illusion is actually a part of reality; it is, for example, the use of the imagination in the consideration of things, and dreaming of things that seem nice contribute to the realization of these dreams within a decent framework of reality. There should not be dichotomies in these things. Things are separated and fragmented where they should be part of the same attitude of living. There should not be a deficiency in any of these things which constitute a normal appreciation toward life. It happens where people have scored well in one category and devoted themselves to that, which happens due to intense social concentration on one aspect or another, and the consolidation and use of the results of this particularized concentration, and thereafter enforcements of one aspect or another, and the

competition which comes into play. This is a materialistic incursion into aspects of nature, and it is where reality becomes competitive with nature, all of it backed by primal human impulses such as lust, avarice, jealousy entering into this evolved competition. All of these elements of life are being studied too hard, and there is an extremity of competition. Why is one part of the human makeup better than another part, or more important? There are, of course, answers to all of this, but we don't know what they are, as this particular visualization is seldom brought up as such or talked about much. On the other hand, they are highly operative in all that's going on without being recognized or identified, except by people studying exactly that situation without taking concern for the solutions of what amounts to a crisis. How to get that squabbling and fighting to stop? Perhaps by breaking it down with sensibility, which doesn't figure much in modern thought. Sensibility is related to the senses, sound, sight, touch, taste, and smell. Being such as this, it is ignored when thought begins, but it should be frequently referred to, without there being a department of sense regulating it and dealing it out. Here we have spontaneity, which nowadays and here is kept under strict control, and watched to make sure it makes no gains. It is what is being watched. But spontaneous, simple behavior is what relates most to life, plain, pure, and simple. We must never forget or overlook what is plain, pure and simple. We shouldn't argue to the point of war. People become stultified because of warfare and this is an obstruction to thought and the expression of sentiments.

Briefly, we fight instead of progressing and fulfilling what has importance to us and come to honor and like fighting, but instead, it would be better if we looked honestly for what is best in us...in order to be able to appreciate ourselves, and not wallow in contumaciousness, which builds up from frustrations which should not occur, if we weren't to be drawn so far afield, and in these days, how far we are drawn is ultimate, resulting from a search for the things which we wanted which were met with frustration. You could ask synergists about the rest.

This is what I believe our problems in the NFFF are coming from. We are distracted from what we are here concerned with, having encountered the frustration of argumentation. What I believe has happened is that, despite the advancement in thought of readers of science fiction and fantasies, which is commonly found in fandom, there are the human fallibilities which fans have, which can be played upon by some of the people who are enemies of science fiction. War is war; it gets to people. When it got personal in fandom, there began a conflict which has not ended. Let's see if we can end it with sensible reasoning. We are still the same people who became science fiction fans.

Don't like poetry? We used to like it. Now we seem to live in a petty sub-world of assaults on one another's egos, questions of fealty to gender, tripping up reasoning which has visible flaws instead of speaking with understanding of the vaunting of the self and attempts to acquire things without going through the obvious steps. Fans are apt to be poseurs. This soft spot in self-image and projection is a major point of assault. Don't pretend to be familiar with things you know little about.

As Gully Foyle said, "Gonna sermonize, me." I had some things I felt that I wanted to say, and I have used this editorial to say them. Hopefully people won't give me the old heave-ho for having said them.

## Women of Science Fiction: Evelyn E. Smith by John Thiel



EVELYN E.  
SMITH  
COLLECTION

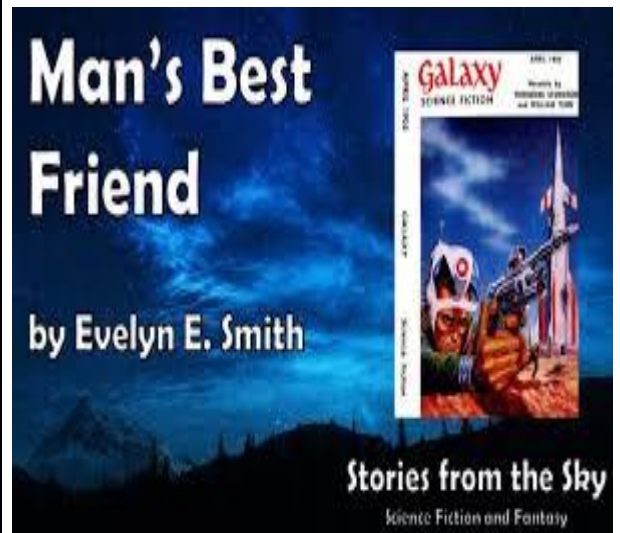
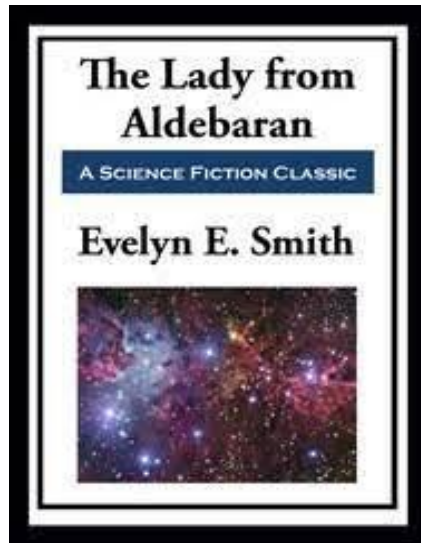
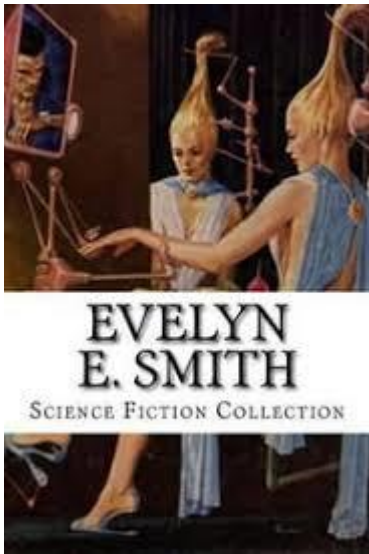


A woman appeared in the science fiction field around the early nineteen fifties with a story of a misguided spaceship flight which ended up in unknown aboriginal territory called "Rocket Into the Past", which had dinosaurs in it which were supposed to still exist in parts of the Earth which were lost from sight. The story won for her a citation as a new science fiction writer.

She became a frequent writer for Galaxy Science Fiction and its companion fantasy magazine Beyond Fantasy Fiction, appearing also in Fantastic Universe and Fantasy and Science Fiction, and other SF magazines. Her stories were adventurous, stupefying, humorous and with implications that brought further thought to standard matters. Another novelette she wrote for Galaxy was about a spaceship flight to the planet Venus, which portrayed Venus as a lush jungle world, or at least the part of it visited by the earthlings was that way, and this impression of Venus was furthered in a lot of science fiction stories by other authors following this story. Emshwiller was the most frequent illustrator of her stories. Some people thought this writer might have been Evelyn Gold, the Galaxy editor's wife, so favorable was he to this author, but no, she was not his wife. The picture above, taken at a convention, shows her reaction to getting an award. She said of this, "I was told in advance that I was getting an award, so I am showing surprise and delight at what all the people are saying about the award."

She had a considerable sense of humor, and contributed much merriment to the magazine and thence to science fiction in general, though she did not, to my knowledge, appear in any anthologies, possibly because so many of them were "idea" anthologies and her writing was more general. Nevertheless, she had a top place in science fiction due to her association with Galaxy Magazine. I know of no novels of her writing, except UNPOPULAR PLANET, which was not as good as her novelettes, in my consideration. Very little was said or known about her, but those reading what she wrote knew everything they needed to know. Her stories were very expressive, and she was harmoniously allied with the writing of science fiction.

Lists of her writings may be discovered at standard locations on the net, Googling Evelyn E Smith.



## AUTOMATION by Judy Carroll



[Editor's note: Judy's column this issue awakens controversy. As a preface, here is a notation I received from her before I received an abbreviated column.]

John, I have spent the last three hours working on my column for Origin. I left for a few minutes. When I came back I pulled up the draft from the bottom right of my computer screen. The only thing left was **Origin—September 2023**. Somehow, my entire work was deleted.

[She made two further attempts to write the column. The second attempt also disappeared. This is the third attempt, which was shortened and which she sent at once.]

Well, John, I was almost done with the column. I was about to send it to you. I don't know what I did, but the entire column was deleted. The only thing left was the subject and I have no idea where it came from.

Readers, I am sorry to say I have no column for September, having written a column twice this month. Both columns disappeared just before I was ready to send them to John.

I will say that as much as I like my computer, right now I am ready for the slower process of pen to paper. Though slower than the computer, writing with pen to paper at least stays where you put it. Unless you leave a window open and the wind blows it off the desk, or you spill a drink on the paper.

[This was followed by a shorter version of the column.]

Last month's column I mentioned what would we do if we no longer had computers, cell phones, calculators, *etc.*

Well, after writing two different columns for Origin and having them both disappear just as I was about to send them to John—leaving only the subject bar available—I am going to give it one more

try. But, briefly.

Computers are great when they behave and a major pain when they don't. Cell phones are good, especially when you can leave text messages when no one answers your call. Calculators are also good if you are in a hurry or have trouble with math.

How many of us no longer remember our own phone number?

How many of us order online rather than going to a store to pick up what we want?

How many of us use the calculator for simple math?

How many of us have quit getting to know the new neighbors?

How many of us have talked to an elderly relative who doesn't have a cell phone?

This could go on and on. Are we becoming hermits in our own houses? Have we given up the joy of family and friends in the same room with us?

What is it that makes us truly happy?



[Note: Google, under Images, Computer Problems, shows all sorts of computer damages and people looking at them with despair.—JT]

## Comments on the Issue





Judy's comments on living with technology are of particular significance because we now are living with technology, much more than we were back when I would read in N3F fanzines various speculations on what it would be like, and warnings about what a speedup in technology being available in the home might lead to. I think it was Gertrude M. Carr who pointed out that people might atrophy if they had machines and devices doing all the work for them. They might also forget how to do it for themselves. Something I've noticed is that a new technology outmodes the prior technology, and the devices then in use become unavailable and obsolete. A good example of this, since it is a problem that I have, is that typewriters, after a period of being robot-controlled, ceased to be sold because offices were now using word processing, as with "Microsoft Word". As it happens, which is exactly what Judy is describing, the equipment we now use might stop functioning. She says she's going back to using a pen. In my own case, if I have to give up the net, I would have to give up my fanzines too, because I don't find mimeographs and spirit duplicators on the market any more, and I can't find anywhere where typewriters are sold. I would have to have a printer do my fanzines, which I am already doing, but they do photocopy and I would not be able to give them typed copy to print. I presently have this copy printed out of the computer via a printer attachment and can't use the printer to copy issues because ink cartridges are expensive and an issue of a fanzine with any respectable number of copies printed would use two packages of cartridges right up, and that's just one fanzine. So I'm held to the net and I've had several experiences of major malfunctions. If things broke down entirely for me, I'd have no recourse. The present available technology is not very durable and gives no guarantees, certainly none with backing.

Similarly, fandom now has its main existence on the net, with little contact with the world of paper fandom. It's fast, but not dependable from the user's viewpoint. Internet use is difficult; oftentimes using the net correctly and expertly is all that's happening. And there is interference with net use. I've had the same experience as Judy; sometimes, with no fault on my part, my word documents vanish, and things disappear from my files. The problem involved is that people using illegal equipment and making unauthorized moves are who does these unexpected things. They have scramblers and displacement equipment and can shut down sites with which they have no involvement, usually one move at a time. This is legally

known as sabotage and their motives are warfare.

Evelyn E. Smith was at one time one of the science fiction writers I liked best. Strangely, she's been ignored since the 70s. The last piece of writing I saw by her was a book called UNPOPULAR PLANET. That's a typical title for her, a humorous one; how could a whole planet be considered unpopular? Apparently it didn't make out very well. The Evelyn Smith touch of humor. I didn't see any reaction to it at all from reviewers and critics. One of the things that was best about her was that her stories did not have a purpose or aim; her aim was to write science fiction, and it was right there before the reader. Not a good story, but a science fiction story, by its nature good.

It always bothered me that she had the same initials as EE Smith, and if just her initials were used, it was the same name. Smith didn't use his first and middle names, it was always EE. So maybe people started calling him "doc" to make sure he wasn't confused with Evelyn Smith. As far as I've ever heard, he was not an actual doctor. People could say "What's up, Doc?" and his answer might be "A spaceship. They just got another one up."

Evelyn Smith had humorous observations like "You have to have a good complicated control panel to compensate for the curvature of the Earth." Rotating at the speed it does, and with a revolutionary speed as well, that's where all the advanced mathematics come from in space flight. A very lively author, who would compete with scientific errors with imagination, fantasy and humor. She was very animating with mundane attitudes, too.



**"Wotta Laff!"**



