



The National **83** Fantasy Fan **Years**

Fandom's Second Oldest Print Publication
Cras ad Stellas — Tomorrow to the Stars
Volume 83 Number 1 January 2024

News

We have a lot of news in this issue. The Short Story Contest results are announced. The call for discussion of the Laureate Awards is announced. Judy Carroll gives us The Director's View. Origin and Ionisphere have suspended publication.

Short Story Contest Winners

Contest Judge Jefferson Swycaffer Writes:

The First Prize goes to "Island of Avarice" by Clint Stevenson. This is high adventure, with blood diamonds, pirates in the night, deadly sword-to-sword combat, and desperate escapes, thrilling and exciting and heart-racing.

The Second Prize goes to "Denebolan Marathon" by Charles Walter. This is more than just a racing story, although it is a sterling example of that sub-genre. This is a race that has life-and-death consequences, and is dramatically thrilling right down to the finish line.

The Third Prize goes to "Forged in Fire" by J.L. Cook. A metal-working magic user and blacksmith strives against an evil curse, finding a friend and saving a Queen.

The Honorable Mention goes to "Welcome to Vulpye" by Jeff Cassell. A romantic drama of foxes in love, sharing adventures and discoveries.

There were thirty-eight entries this year, not as many, alas, as last year. The entries came to us from five differ-

ent countries. The stories were a rich mixture of fantasy, high and low, and magical drama, as well as a few stories of classical science fiction.

Late in the year, one of the contestants wrote to ask that his story be withdrawn from consideration for the contest. This, of course, was sad to hear...but the reason for it is delightful: the author had sold the story and so it was no longer eligible for the contest. One of the unstated goals of this contest is to serve as a springboard for our contestants to move on to "professional" status and sell stories to paying markets. I hope that many more of our contestants succeed and make a name for themselves, moving onward and upward in a challenging and competitive literary world!

The stories were all inventive and imaginative, creative, original, and inspiring. The emotional tonality ranged from despair to triumph, with a healthy contribution of love and romance. The heroes were heroic, and the villains were despicable. The monsters were scary, and the drama was pulse-pounding. Today's writers are as inventive as ever in literary history, and the stories submitted to this contest were all highly inspiring for their unique, individual touch. No two stories in this contest have ever been quite alike. The writers are able to turn new tropes, invent new twists, and create new ways to look at adventure. The sense of drama is rivalled only by the sense of wonder. It was an honor to select the winners of this year's contest. The future of literary high adventure is a promise fulfilled here. To those who participated and did not win, please accept my congratulations for having written thrilling and emotionally gripping stories -- every single one of you! -- and take heart: your stories are beloved, and you are all triumphant in your creativity.



The February TNFF Submission Deadline is February 16th.

4 ... Before the Storm—Tiffanie Gray
7 ... Boat to Golden Island—Tiffanie Gray



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 Continued Next Column, Middle

Laureate Awards

Once again, we begin the process that leads to giving the oldest fan awards in science fiction, the N3F Laureate Awards. The first step in the process is to consider the list of award topics. The proposed topics for this year are

Best Fan Writer
 Best Fan Artist
 Best Fan Editor
 Best Fan Web Site
 Best Non-N3F Fan Publication (electronic publication is

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Join or Renew

We offer four different memberships. Memberships with TNFF via paper mail are \$18; memberships with TNFF via email are \$6. All other zines are email only. Additional memberships at the address of a current member are \$4. Public memberships are free. Send payments to Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049. Pay online at N3F.org. Our PayPal contact is treasurer@n3f.org Send phillies@4liberty.net your email address for a public membership.

The National Fantasy Fan (originally Bonfire), Vol. LXXXIII Number 1, January 2024 ISSN 2169-3595.
 Published monthly by The National Fantasy Fan Federation. Send material for this zine as electronic files (txt or rtf preferred, images as jpgs, do not send PDFs) to the Editor: George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609, phillies@4liberty.net The submission deadline for each issue is the 15th of the month.

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allowed)
 Best N3F Fanzine
 Best Novel (over 100,000 words)
 Best Shorter Work under 100,000 words) or Anthology
 Best Animation (anime/cartoon)
 Best Manga/Comic Book/Graphic Novel
 Best Book Editor
 Best Pro Artist, cover or otherwise
 Best Television Show, Film, or Video
 Best Literary-Critical Work
 Best Historical Work
 Best None of the Above

You may nominate up to two entries in each category. There will be one winner in each category—there is no ‘No Award’ choice. Exception: For None of the Above, the vote will be ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for each nominee.

Director’s View from Judy Carroll

I’ve been thinking a lot about what to say for the Directors View. The thought that won’t leave my mind is the activity level of our members.

Several years ago, some of my relatives were active members of the N3F. I don’t remember now what positions they held or how long they were members. What I do remember was the strong membership and the strong activity by the members.

I remember looking at the N3F website and all the Bureaus and activities they had to offer. The Correspondence Bureau had a lot of members. There was a bureau for a blind member - cassettes were sent to him - which he returned when he was finished. The Round Robins were in the hundreds and they covered many topics from famous writers to movies, space travel, dreams, etc., (Not every RR was connected to science fiction, fantasy, or horror.) Fanzines were available with artwork and original stories, poems, etc. by members.

Today, we don’t have as many active members as in some previous years. I started thinking about the difference between now and when my relatives were members.

I feel the most important difference between then and now is the way in which the information and activities are given to the members. Most of the member activities were sent by Postal Mail. Not computers. Today, most everything is delivered by computers. I think the only activities that use Postal Mail are the Round Robins (we do have Netflix Streaming Round Robins), and the TNFF (it also is sent by email to members).

When the Postal Mail was the main means of N3F communication, messaging was more personal. Each member was recognized every month with TNFF and Fanzines and whatever else they had shown an interest in. There was a bond of friendship and common interests.

Today, each member still gets the TNFF. Many members receive different zines put out by the N3F. A member can still have the following experiences - online; Round Robins, Art, Writing, Correspondence etc.

What is my concern? If everything received from the N3F comes through the computer, we as members can develop an out of sight, out of mind, attitude. When something comes by Postal Mail we pay attention to it. Even if it is an offer to subscribe to a service we don’t care about. We don’t want the service, but we did pay enough attention to recognize its existence.

Please, as members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, let’s be more aware of our membership and show to ourselves, and to the other members, and the rest of the Science Fiction community, that we care and are active in the N3F. Let us honor the Founders of the National Fantasy Fan Federation and support all that the N3F has stood for since its birth in April, 1941.

Presidential Notes

Welcome to the N3F’s eighty-third year of existence. May it be only the beginning of a long and glorious fannish history.

We really do need some more volunteers! We are a membership club with no paid staff. Our current volunteers are doing great things for the N3F, but more are needed. What are some of our vacant positions?

Membership retention—the Bureau contacts members whose memberships have or are about to have expired, urging them to renew.

Membership recruitment—the Bureau advertises the N3F to fen everywhere.

History and Research—the bureau studies the history of fandom, prepares articles, and produces Origin.

Fan-Pro Relations—The Bureau does interviews of SF writers, famous fen, and other sfnal-oriented people, and produces Ionisphere.

Comics Bureau—covering traditional comic books, traditionally sending articles to Tighthead.

Club News—covering news of SF clubs around the world, and sending information and articles to FanAc-

tivity Gazette.

Social Media—representing the N3F in social media, of which there are currently a vast number.

Cosplay and costuming—Tightbeam has traditionally been where we have published articles on this topic.

Letters of Comment

George and Jon:

Regrettably, I'm going to have to forego all activity involving periodicals. I am unable to maintain this mode of activity due to computer failure. So I will have to abandon Origin and Ionisphere, and withdraw from NAPA. Perhaps you will be able to find replacements to manage the Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau and the History and Research Bureau. I might maintain further contact by way of email.

—John Thiel

Dear George and Jon:

Catching up, and moving forward. Happy New Year! I have Volume 82, Number 12 of The National Fantasy Fan, and I am back in the same coffee shop I was in last loc, making more notes. Let's see what the caffeine made me think of this time...

My loc...found out that Jean-Paul Garnier is not only bringing back Worlds of IF, but Galaxy, too. Resurrecting these wonderful old magazines, no matter the format they might appear in (looks like .pdf for the moment), is quite ambitious, and they deserve our support. Election results...many elections elsewhere would be very pleased to have a 40% turnout.

If you'd send me a short stack of flyers, I would be pleased to take them to the NASFiC and World Fantasy Convention. It couldn't hurt, and it may yet get you some new members. I wish conventions still had flyer tables...

I have been told many times over the decades that the letter column is the heart of a fanzine, and fanzine fandom. I've had my doubts from time to time...some fanzines these days seem not to have room for correspondence, merely presenting essays without discussion. (Maybe they don't get letters? One such zine I responded to didn't appreciate the fact I wrote, so...)

Thank you for more information on Jo Clayton. I checked my book shelves, and the only book of hers I have is Diadem from the Stars. She died far too young, and it's names like hers we must keep alive.



Before the Storm—Tiffanie Gray

I had another day of work today, and I am falling asleep quickly, so I will wrap. Thanks for this one, looking forward to Volume 83, Number 1. See you then.

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

George and Jon,

I just read an email from John telling me he is going to stop putting together Origin, because of computer problems. I am really going to miss writing for Origin and receiving it every month.

With Sadness,
Judy

Treasury

PayPal balance \$317.21
In: \$18 for memberships (less fees)

NSB balance: \$2460.34
In: \$36 for membership renewals

2 life members + 20 electronic + 17 regular = 39 voting members
8 archive members + 244 public members = 252 non-voting members

Thanks to Thomas Feller and Wesley Kawato for renewing, and Sam Lubell and Ahrvid Engholm for upgrading!

Welcome to Sandy Lender and Jessica Cook!

Bureaus

Art Bureau

As of recently in the past few months, artist Tiffany Gray has been contributing with her work. So has the artist known as "Fish". Many interesting pieces - especially the last one with the robots opening and enjoying gifts around a Christmas tree. Aside from that, I haven't really received any more contributions, although Alan White seems to be extremely active on Facebook offering all kinds of links to his work and especially newer ones involving the theme of Cthulhu, the octopus-like being in different scenarios and settings.

Aside from these three very talented artists, please do not hesitate to send in your own art. The N3F is always looking for creative contributions for their varied publications. Just send them in to me at : jo-se77sanchez@yahoo.com and we thank you very much !

Welcommittee

To start off this year we have two new members, Sandy Lender and Jessica Cook. Sandy's interests are Tolkien and The Lord of the Rings, Goodkind, indies and MeWe. Jessica enjoys novels and discovered the N3F online. Welcome Sandy and Jessica! We hope both of you have a Great Experience as new members of the N3F.

Being active is the most fulfilling way to enjoy being a member of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Please read the current TNFF for a list of the many activities and bureaus you can join. If you find a bureau or activity you are interested in, please contact the head of the bureau or activity for more information. The purpose of the Welcommittee is to welcome new members to the club and to help them find an activity or bureau with members that have the same likes and interests.

If you have questions about the N3F or are interested in helping with the Welcommittee please contact:
Judy Carroll at BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

Eldritch Science

There is a pious hope that in 2024 more than one issue of Eldritch Science will appear. Certainly we have more than enough material for several issues. Send your longer stories to George Phillies, philliles@4liberty.net

Round Robins Bureau

Welcome one and all. We have two kinds of Round Robins available, Netflix Streaming and Postal Mail.

Netflix Streaming Round Robins

ATTENTION!!! The Netflix Streaming Round Robin Experiment Is Completed!

The Travelers NSRR was completed on August 4th. I am happy to announce it was a success!!!

If you would like to know what the members had to say about this Round Robin, you can find their responses in the August, 2023 issue of TNFF.

We are offering Travelers again in case the above reviews have piqued your interest.

Travelers - 3 seasons - Members and RM needed.

New series starting soon - Black Mirror.

This series has a RM and 1 other member.

We have two NSRR waiting for RM and members - Stranger Things - 4 seasons - Netflix says the 5th and final season will be coming.

Raising Dion - Raising Dion - 2 seasons -on-going

Please contact me if you are interested in joining and/or becoming a RM.

If you have a suggestion for a NSRR please contact me.

- 1 - A member chooses the series he/she wishes to watch.
- 2 - When they have decided which series they wish to watch they contact me and I will tell them whether there are enough members to begin the RR.
- 3- When there are 2 members, and the Robin Master, the RR will begin.
- 4 - The Robin Master (RM) emails the Netflix Streaming Round Robin (NSRR) members with a schedule. Two episodes a week are recommended when starting the RR. However, more episodes a week can be considered if the members choose to do so. ALL members must agree to the number of episodes watched in a week. We want this to be a fun adventure. Not a cumbersome one.
- 5 - Once the required episodes for that week have been viewed, that member will email each member in a joint email with their comments. At the top of the email the episodes viewed should be listed.
- 6 - Repeat steps 4 & 5 each week until the series ends.

Postal Mail

Postal Mail is the traditional Round Robin (RR). Mem-

bers who have chosen the same topic discuss their likes and dislikes. Each RR needs at least three members and a Robin Master (RM). When enough members have signed up the RM will send them a letter explaining how the RR works.

(If you want to know more about how a RR works before you join, please let me know and I will give you more information. My email address and postal address are listed at the end of this article.)

We have the following Postal Mail RR at this time:
Worldwide Folklore RR
Heroic Women.

If you have any questions about either of these RR, or wish to join, please contact me by email, if possible, or by postal mail. My email and postal address are at the end of this article.

If anyone is interested in starting a new RR, please contact me. I will put the information in the next TNFF as "seeking members."

If interested in joining either of the RR above please contact me. My contact information is at the end of this article.

Contact: Judy Carroll
971 East 120 South
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660
OR Email : blueshadows2012@gmail.com

Ionisphere

John Thiel advises us that he will not be able to edit Ionisphere or to continue as Bureau Head of the Fan-Pro Coordinating Committee. There is a definite opening for interviews with stfnal writers and artists, important fen, and the like. In the short term, these can be published in The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono. Contact George Phillies for details.

Correspondence Bureau

"In a very real sense, we are all Aliens on a strange planet. We spend most of our lives reaching out and trying to communicate. If during our whole lifetime, we could reach out and really communicate with just two people we are indeed very fortunate."

Gene Roddenberry

Following are the names, interests and contact infor-

mation of members seeking correspondence:

Jeffrey Redmond - by Email - redmondjeff@hotmail.com
by Postal Mail
1335 Beechwood St NE
Grand Rapids, MI
49505-3830

I am an old Star Trek of the original television show days I enjoy both Fantasy and Science Fiction My favorite author is me with my Chronicles of Erda fantasy fiction books My hobbies include reading, writing, watching TV, and meeting with friends I have books and memorabilia collections, and try to keep up with my cat.

Steve Condrey - By Email - gscondrey@gmail.com
Favorite genres: science fiction and fantasy, also some true crime and historical fiction. I particularly enjoy military and post-apocalyptic science fiction (but not of the "retired Navy SEAL who just happens to own a ranch in Montana bugs out amid a rampaging zombie horde that's totally not a proxy for societal undesirables" variety of apocalypse).

Favorite authors: Like many others, I cut my teeth on Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury, and Isaac Asimov. I also enjoy Robert E. Howard, Octavia Butler, Andre Norton, Anne McCaffrey, and Frederik Pohl. Among writers who are still alive and active today, I like Harry Turtledove, Larry Niven, Robert Sawyer, David Weber, and S. M. Stirling.

Movies and TV shows: Star Trek , Babylon 5, Star Wars, Doctor Who, Aliens, Blade Runner, Conan the Barbarian (1980).

I do like to write, but haven't worked up the nerve to publish something. Maybe getting more involved here will help me get to that point (I hope!)

Outside of fandom, I am active in my local astronomy club. I edit their newsletter and occasionally do outreach activities. I also volunteer at my church. Most of all, my wife, two kids (ages 16 and 12), and a fluctuating menagerie of house pets.

Collections: I had a pretty sizable collection of books, games, and memorabilia that unfortunately was a casualty of the 2019 Missouri River flooding. I am currently rebuilding. My home office is heavily inspired by Forry Ackerman's Ackermansion, but at a much smaller scale (for the time being)

Judy Carroll - By Email BlueShadows2012@gmail.com
by Postal Mail

My favorite genres are Science Fiction and Murder Mysteries. My favorite authors are Shirley Jackson, Ray Bradbury, Dean Koontz, and Julie E. Czerneda. I like to write short stories and poems. I love being around young children. Their laughter, happiness, and excitement are contagious.

If you would like to join the Correspondence Bureau and have your name and interests listed please contact me at

Send email requests to : Judy Carroll BlueShadows2012@gmail.com or Send postal mail requests to: Judy Carroll 975 E 120 S Spanish Fork, UT 84660

Origin

John Thiel advises us that he will not be able to edit Origin or to continue as Bureau Head of the History and Research Bureau. The N3F should definitely continue to be interested in the history of fandom, in which we have, of course, played a leading role. History? For example, there are at least two occasions in which the N3F has expelled a member, and it is not clear why. In the short term, historical essays can appear in Tightbeam or N'APA, while interviews can be published in The N3F Review of Books Contact George Phillis for details.

Book Review Bureau

Monthly publication of The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono continues. Each month, we manage to review tens of new and old SF novels, occasional literary-critical works, and ideas for better writing.

Welcome to the Writers Exchange

It's a new year and hopefully a successful and happy one for the Writers Exchange and the rest of the N3F family.

Following is what I have planned for 2024:

- Quotes by writers.
- Topic discussions
- Interviews with N3F writers
- Writing exercises, questions and challenges
- And anything else I can think connected to writing - Suggestions are welcome.



Boat to Golden Island—Tiffanie Gray

Writers Quote for the month:

"A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people. ...Writers are unique beings. We don't consider it a waste of time to spend ten minutes hunting for the perfect word to convey a difficult concept."
Thomas Mann*

Topic Discussion; What is your definition of a writer?

- Someone who is published and sells many books?
- Someone who is published?
- Someone who self publishes?
- Someone who writes frequently and is not published?
- Someone who writes when they feel like it and is not published?

We can go on and on with this series of questions, but it's not going to get us anywhere. Each question has the word 'published,' as if that were the most important thing. Though being published is the goal of many people who write, but, is that the most important thing? No! The most important thing is to Write.

While working on this article I found the following:

"What is the best definition of writing?"

"Writing may be defined as any conventional system of marks that represents the utterances of a language, writing renders language visible. Whereas speech is ephemeral, writing is concrete and, by comparison, permanent. Both speaking and writing depend upon the underlying structures of languages.*

I found another question and answer worth quoting.

"What defines you as a writer?"

"I like to define writer as someone who writes, not someone who is published for their writing per se. Let me qualify that a little: A writer is someone who writes regularly and consistently, someone who engages in the process." **

Writing Questions. How do you feel about writing? Does the story, novel, etc. come into place easily and quickly? Or does it make you struggle for the right words until you're ready to toss the whole idea into the ground and bury it there?

My response. I like to write. Especially if it comes easily. There are times when I see a set of words just begging to become a poem or a short story, or a story poem. (My name for long poems that tell a story.) Many times the words come so fast and the pictures in my mind are so clear that it flows along without any difficulty. Then, all of a sudden, about half way through, the pictures crumble and the words disappear. I am left staring at the words I have already written and trying to figure out where to go from here. Now I have to really think about where this idea is going. Sometimes I can reread the words and the pictures come back along with new words and new pictures and I'm able to finish. Other times, the halfway mark stays just that way for days or weeks.

I have one poem I have been working on for years. It is a Christmas poem. It has the "beat" or "rhythm" of The Night Before Christmas. (Those of you who know what I am referring to, please tell me the proper word. I would really appreciate it.)

I am looking forward to your responses. Please participate. I really want to know how other writers handle the writing blackout.

. * Bobby Powers —> 16 Quotes That Capture the Essence of Writing.

** britannica.com —> topic, writing

*** Jane Friedman October, 2017 JaneFriedman.com - blog

The Writers Exchange Bureau is for anyone interested in writing. You don't have to be a published writer, or strive to be a published writer. You don't have to have written a book, a poem, a story, or the lyrics to a song. All you need is an interest in writing.

I would like this bureau to be an informative and a pleasant experience. If you have any ideas of what you would like to see in the Writers Exchange, please feel free to contact me by email or postal mail. and tell me your ideas. My contact information is at the end of this article.

If you have a story you would like read, please contact me, and I will check with our readers to see who is available. I will contact you with the name and email address of your reader.

Please do not contact a reader unless I have assigned that

reader to you. Occasionally we get several short stories at the same time and I don't want any of our readers getting "reading overload."

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

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

If interested, please contact: Judy Carroll. BlueShadows2012@gmail.com OR if you prefer postal mail, Judy Carroll 975 E 120 S Spanish Fork, UT 84660

Games Bureau

Battle for Honor (battleforhonor.de) is a computer game, web-based, with a single processor and a fixed one turn per day. There are resources, there are constructions, there are warships, there are space pirates...and we are in the test panel stage. The web address takes you to a location to join. The game has echoes of the Weber Honor Harrington books, but is not recognizable except in the names of various stars and outside groups. 950 or so stars and 3000 planets give a lot of room for expansion.

Pro Bureau

The Pro Bureau continues to support neffer authors by publishing The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono. Neffer members, notably Jeffrey Redmond, run the Facebook Page Science Fiction, now with close to 74,000 readers, on which member-authors can publicize their newer and older books.

SerCon

Betsy Curtis Bio-Bibliography by Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D. N3F Historian

Elizabeth M. "Betsy" Curtis (September 17, 1917 – April 17, 2002) was a science fiction (SF) and fantasy writer.



She was born in Toledo, Ohio, and earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in English from Oberlin College. In 1966, she received an M. Ed. from Allegheny College.

Curtis's daughter is Maggie Thompson (born November 29, 1942), long-time editor of the *Comic Buyer's Guide*.

Publications

Curtis' first story, "Divine Right" was published in the Summer, 1950 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* (F&SF). The then editor of F&SF, Anthony Boucher, is usually credited with "discovering" her. Her second story was published later that same year in the SF magazine *Imagination*.



Over the years, her work appeared in various other popular SF prozines, including *Amazing Stories*, *Analog*, *Authentic*, *Galaxy*, *If*, *Infinity*, and *Marvel Science Stories*.

She is reported to have published sixteen stories during the 1950 – 1973 period. Her story, "The Trap," is included in the anthology *Women Resurrected* (2011).

She also published a lot of poetry, including the following books: *Dilemma* (1951), *Antediluvia* (1979), *Embryology Reflection* (1979), *The Flight of the Right Cerebral Hemisphere* (1979), *The Left Cerebral Hemisphere Speaks Up for the Right One* (1979), and *Lab Exercise* (1979).

Posthumous Chapbooks

The Trap (2010)
The Protector (2016)



Temptriss of Planet Delight (2021) [as by B. Curtis]
The Old Ones (2021)
Rebuttal (2022)

Pseudonyms

Some of her early stories appeared as published by B. Curtis, and some of her LoCs to genre magazines were signed Elizabeth Curtis.

Awards/Honors/Recognitions

In 1969, she was nominated for a Hugo Award for Best Short Story for her story "The Steiger Effect."

Her "A Peculiar People," originally published in F&SF, was selected by Bleiler & Dikty for one of their "best science fiction" anthologies.

Concluding Comments

Curtis didn't have a book published during her lifetime. Perhaps for this reason, she is not listed in most genre reference works, including Yntema's *More Than 100 Woman Science Fiction Writers* (1988).

At one time her daughter, Maggie, planned a collection of her mother's work; but I don't think it was ever completed.

Curtis was an active member of the Society for Creative



Anachronism. Curtis' good friend was SF author Basil Wells. Her daughter Maggie met her future husband, Don Thompson, at a party at Wells' home. Curtis died at the age of 84.

Her papers are housed at Syracuse University in its Special Collections Research Center.

Sources

Bowman, Roy F. Index to The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, 1988.

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Judy Carroll's Origin Column

Judy Carroll had written a column for Origin before John Thiel withdrew as its Editor. We publish that column here.

Well, it is January, 2024 - another year of hope, of love, of happiness, of despair, of disappointment, of sadness.

When I was a child someone told me that whatever you do on the first day of the year you will also do every day for the rest of that year. I don't remember exactly what I thought about this new information, but knowing the way I think, I probably came up with something like the following: If I broke my leg on January 1st, that means I will break it again every day of that year. But, would it be broken in the same place every day, or in a different place? Or would it mean I would have 365 different places broken on my leg?

Now, looking at it from an "adult point of view, and with a positive attitude", I've come up with the following: If

we were happy the entire day of January 1st, we would be happy for 365 days. Sounds great, doesn't it? Well, let's explore this idea. We would be happy when a friend finally gets that new car he's been saving for months to buy. We would be happy when our sports team wins, when we go to dinner with loved ones, when a movie comes out starring our favorite actor. But, this would also mean we would be happy when a winter storm causes a flood, when a neighbor's dog gets hit by a car, and when we break our leg in three places.

What if we were sad on January 1st. What could the next 365 days bring us? They might look something like this: We would be sad when the refrigerator died and the cost of a new one had to be taken out of our vacation savings. We would be sad when a family member was sick and had to be hospitalized. We would be sad when our favorite restaurant closed. But this would also mean we would be sad at the wedding of a family member who has finally found his forever love. We would be sad when we got the promotion we have been working so hard to get. We would be sad when a niece had her first baby.

I guess what I am trying to say, in a roundabout way, is we need to be in charge of our own emotions. I'm not saying that is an easy task, because, for most of us, it isn't easy. I can be in a good mood and walk into a room and pick up on negative vibes. What happens to me? Negativity. Sometimes the only way to get rid of the negativity is to leave the room. Other times I walk into a room and the atmosphere is full of positivity. Now everything is great.

Recently, while trying to rid myself of the negativity I was feeling, I remembered something my mother used to do. Everyday, at least once, she would look in the mirror and say out loud to herself, "Every day. In every way. I am getting better and better."

What has this got to do with being in charge of our emotions? It makes you feel better about yourself. And when you feel better about yourself you feel better about your surroundings and other people.

When I was thinking of ideas for this column, my mother and her daily mantra came to mind. I hadn't thought of this in years. Soon after, a seven year old family member came to visit. I told her about my mother and the mirror. When I said, "Every day in every way, I am getting better and better." I felt so uplifted. So, happy. The little one repeated it. A huge smile appeared on her face. She, too, was happy.

You don't have to look at yourself in the mirror when you say these words, but I have found that saying them out loud is very important.

2024 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest

Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

Now and then, it has been suggested to open the N3F Amateur Short Story Contest to professional writers, writers who have had one or two sales. I've never favored this. It is my opinion that we want new blood. We want to reward the new kids on the block. To be blunt, we want writing that is not that good. We want stories from people who don't know their object from their subject, who don't know where commas go, and who use apostrophes to denote plurals -- but who have a story to tell. I want stories from guys nobody's ever heard of...but in the years ahead, we will. Those who are already successful don't need the encouragement of our little contest. If they were to enter the contest, the danger is that they'd win, every time, and crowd out the promising newcomer.

1. This contest is open to all amateur writers in the field, regardless of whether they're members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. For the purposes of this contest, we define an amateur as someone who has sold no more than two (2) stories to professional science fiction or fantasy publications.
2. Stories entered in the contest must be original, unpublished, not longer than 8,500 words in length—and must be related to the science fiction, fantasy, or similar genres in the opinion of the judge.
3. Email attachments of Word documents are acceptable for submission. Manuscripts on paper should be typed, single sided on 8 1/2"-by- 11" white paper, double spaced, with pages numbered. The name of the author should not appear anywhere on the manuscript to ensure impartial judging. Photocopies are acceptable, if they are of good quality. Computer printouts must be legible.
4. Contestants can enter up to three stories. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) if you would like your story returned at the end of the contest. Stories will not be returned without an SASE. Do not send your only copy in case of accidental loss. We are not responsible for lost manuscripts.
5. Email entries will be accepted. Send to Jefferson P. Swycaffer at abontides@gmail.com. No guarantee can be made of email receipt. Privacy and property rights will be absolutely respected. No one other than the Short Story Judge will ever see the submission.
6. **There are no entry fees.**
7. Cash prizes totaling \$100 will be awarded as follows: First prize is \$50, second \$30, and third \$20. Honorable mentions and semi-finalists will receive a certificate of award.
8. Send all manuscripts to the contest manager: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373; abontides@gmail.com. Emails with the story attached in word format are preferred. Paper manuscripts are acceptable. All entries must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2024.
9. The Short Story Judge is a published science fiction professional, and also a loving fan of the sf and fantasy genres. All comments and critiques are solely the Short Story Judge's opinion, but he promises to be constructive and polite.
10. Stories will also be reviewed by the Editor of the N3F Fiction zine Eldritch Science; authors of suitable tales will be invited to submit their tales for publication in our zine. This review and invitation will only occur after contest winners have been announced, so it can have no effect on the contest outcome.
11. The NSF may want to publish an electronic book including top entries from one or more years of publication. You will not be contacted about this until after the contest is over and prizes have been awarded. If we want to publish your story, you will have to sign over to us first world serial rights. Your willingness to sign over rights cannot affect whether or not you win the contest. Winners will be notified as soon as the judging is completed. Announcements and notifications of winning entries will be made by March 2025. Please take your time and submit your best work. You can resubmit stories previously entered if they did not win previously. All entries will be kept confidential and will be judged fairly and anonymously. The deadline for all entries is Dec. 31, 2024. Good luck!

Please supply on a separate page the following information as your entry form.

Title of story (for identification): Author's name and address: Author's email address:

I have read the above rules for the 2024 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and I agree to them.

Signature/Date: _____

Mail to: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373 ; or email abontides@gmail.com



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2024 Short Story Contest

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