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Editorial

For this issue I bring you a series of
interviews with independent SFFH magazine
and book publishers and editors. Today's
small press scene is vast and rich, and these
publishers have been doing amazing work.
Apex Magazine is now in the 20th year! An
incredible accomplishment as the publishing
industry continues to change and throw new
challenges at indie publishers. Throughout
the history of science fiction, magazines and
small presses come and go, but they are the
backbone of our genre. I also attended the
2025 Eaton Conference and bring you an
interview with coordinator André Carrington.

I'll be running free ads for books by N3F
members, so send those in if you have them.

¼ page is ideal for the ads. Likewise, if
members have new books coming out, please
get in touch about a possible interview. I also
encourage all amateur writers in the club to
submit to the N3F short story contest. You've
got nothing to lose!

As always, letters of comment welcome. I'd
love to hear what you think of the zine.

Jean-Paul L. Garnier

Joshua Tree, CA

May 2025

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Letters of Comment

The new edition of Ionisphere was, I think,
superb. It looks quite professional and the
interviews are outstanding. I am happy to see
the publication continue and to be in Mr.
Garnier's capable hands.

-John Thiel

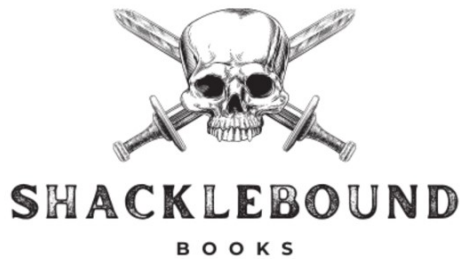
*Thanks, John! It's great relief to hear you say
that as I follow in your footsteps as editor of
this zine. Here's to many more years of
Ionisphere.*

Thank you particularly for the article about
Worlds of If and Galaxy magazines being
revived, and for the interview with the
founder of Ark Press! Something to add to
my list of SF markets.

-Garth Spencer

*Hi Garth. I'm glad to hear that you enjoyed
the issue! My hope is to spread the word
about the incredible variety of markets out
there today. SF is alive and well...mostly, I
think.*

**Interview with Eric Fomley of
Shacklebound Books**



JPG - What were your motivations behind starting Shacklebound Books?

EF - I started Shacklebound Books because I saw a gap in the industry on flash fiction focused anthologies and collections. There are plenty of markets that publish flash length pieces, but anthologies and collections are rarer for speculative fiction. I wanted to fill this gap because I think flash has a lot of amazing potential and I'd like it to reach more readers and gain more of a following.

JPG - Why did you decide to focus on short form SFF, such as flash fiction and drabbles?

EF - I've always been passionate about flash fiction. I think the form has a lot of neat potential to it and there aren't a ton of publishers that publish all flash collections and anthologies. It's a void I saw in the industry that I wanted to fill.

JPG - What do you find are the strengths of publishing themed anthologies?

EF - Themed anthologies can be neat because no matter how many flash writers submit stories, each one can be such a different take on a theme. I enjoy blending a ton of different

styles and story types under the umbrella of one theme. I think the short format enables a lot of emotional and evocative storytelling. The theme is just the trope wrapper. The strength of the themed anthology is almost a marketing one. If you like a certain kind of story, then you'll like the stories in the anthology of your favorite theme.

JPG - Some of your anthologies are series, such as Dread Space and Chronos, how do you find that these series perform versus one off books?

EF - I have found the series anthologies have performed better. I think the strength is that readers enjoy the tiny stories to whatever the theme is and when they get to the end, they're delighted to find out there's another volume of even more. It's been a pleasant thing to learn.

JPG - What are the greatest challenges and rewards of running a small press today?

EF - Challenge wise, it's hard to maintain a press with the upfront costs involved with putting together a book, paying authors, etc. There's also the factor of time when I have my own writing endeavors, a full time job, and a family with children. But it's rewarding creatively to assemble the anthologies, to read the many different stories in slush to the theme, and to see the positive reviews for the finished products.



JPG - Aside from releasing many anthologies, you've recently started publishing single author collections. Was this part of the plan all along, and what other types of books do you plan on publishing in the future?

EF - It wasn't initially part of the plan, but it was something I was doing with my own writing. Somewhere along the way of publishing my Short Science Fiction Stories collections, it occurred to me that it would be neat if more authors put out flash fiction collections. There aren't a lot of publishers doing that right now, so I decided to try it out with Shacklebound. The results have been a little hit and miss, but I think there's a market for them for sure.

JPG - What would you like authors to know about Shacklebound Books before submitting their work?

EF - I tend to like darker fiction. Science fiction and fantasy that has elements of horror in them are generally more exciting reads for me. Also, I like publishing great stories, not just "name" authors. If you've not made your first sale, don't hesitate to send something my way!



JPG - What are you currently working on, and what's coming up next for you?

EF - In my own writing I'm currently pushing myself on very aggressive flash and short story writing goals. In Shacklebound, I've just launched Anomaly, a pro-paying micro fiction magazine for dark science fiction stories.

<https://shackleboundbooks.wordpress.com/>

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Interview with Aimer and Marin of Radon Journal



JPG - What were the motivations for starting Radon Journal? Tell us about the decisions to focus mostly on anarchist and transhumanist science fiction?

Aimer: Because we were tired of being told it was silly to imagine living in the stars while simultaneously fighting to make this world better. As young writers there was never a place inviting us to combine our two passions: science fiction wonder and anarchist idealism. Graduate programs told us science fiction literature wasn't worthy of eyes or pens compared to literary narratives. Publishers told us they were afraid of being "too political" despite the rise of authoritarian policies seeping into business and public life. And so we created a space that published what we wanted to read. We created a journal that is simultaneously a living protest and a place to escape from the world.

To be a reader (or writer) is to dream. It is to imagine other worlds, alternative realities, and examine *what if*. Science fiction readers are naturally progressive folk and interested in new ideas, and so we have thankfully had a smooth existence since launch.



Transhumanism as a main pillar of our journal came about before we widened it to science fiction in general. But frankly we worried not enough people knew what the word meant. It is central to our brand of anarchism, in that we believe transhumanist technology offers freedom. Specifically it is the physical freedom to be without death, disease, and aging. We understand that this advanced technology comes with challenges, which is why we believe it must be paired with social freedom and breaking from capitalism and the profit-motive. Because if corporations or ill-intentioned governments gain control of these technologies, we know they will use them for exploitation and self-gain.

We understand that our brand of politics mixed with science fiction may put off some potential readers. The ideas and words we champion can be frightening when encountered for the first time. But we hope through creating this journal and existing as a positive publisher in the community that people open up to the ideas we hold and those who reflect them. We publish many types of authors with many different stories to tell. Some of them are cheerful and idealistic and

some are grim dystopian warnings for the future. But at the end of the day, they are all captivating stories that deserve to be read and enjoyed.

To end on a pragmatic note, we understood from the outset that to make it as a new semi-professional science fiction journal we needed to stand out. We could not directly compete against industry giants such as *Asimov's* or *Clarkesworld*, and so new journals like ours must embrace the micro-niche. Be different in a unique way that stands out and that is authentic to who we are. That passion carries over into day-to-day operations and ensures enthusiasm stays high and that we attract an editorial staff and authors who share our passions. The end result is a unique and wonderful journal that is building an exceptional community we are proud to be part of.

JPG - Radon Journal has a large, semi-anonymous volunteer staff, how do your team dynamics work and how do the decision-making aspects of running the journal work behind the scenes?

Marin: *Radon* tries its best to implement our anarchist views into our internal processes, so all of our work is highly collaborative.

While we started off with all having baseline editorial titles, we only recently began

adding more positions within *Radon* as we grew (i.e. publishing department, marketing staff, a team of First Readers). We strive to



involve everyone in the process as much as possible, and we don't operate as many hierarchical literary magazines do. Everyone gets a say.

Aimer: Our larger team size (over a dozen) is a recent development. For the first few years we only had around five of us working together on each aspect of the journal. We'd run everything by each other and make unanimous decisions. This led to overwork and burnout, with some team members feeling like they weren't exploring publishing processes that were most interesting to them. Meaning some naturally wanted to drift entirely to editorial rather than also working also in marketing and production. About a year ago we had most of the team go on hiatus due to mental health challenges or wanting to become booksellers or teachers.

So we brought on a new cohort of passionate team members and decided to specialize our roles. It takes over a year to get fully trained working at a literary journal like ours and to know its ins-and-outs. So, we are still training everyone we brought on board last year.

This need for guidance meant our senior editors took a more active role in teaching and sometimes correcting decisions that might not perfectly align with the journal's goals. As the new folks learn they receive more leeway and operate autonomously. Story decisions are still made through group discussion and no one editor, even a founder,

has the ability to accept a story without a majority of agreement from the other editors.

JPG - You recently went from exclusively digital to print as well. What have been the rewards and challenges of the transition?

Marin: Speaking personally, there is nothing like the feeling of having a print copy of something dear to you in your hands. I think a lot of our authorial community feels the same way, and I am looking forward to continuing this journey into print, and hopefully marketing outward. Sticking to our mission, we will always remain a free-to-read journal online, so it's been tricky selling the print copies to anyone outside of our existing network of authors. But we have an incredible marketing staff and I know that print's not dead (yet) so . . . the future is bright for this side of our publication process.

Aimer: The challenges have been re-tooling our internal editorial and production timelines, learning graphic design, acquiring distributors, and learning to juggle creating five journal versions every issue. We now produce a print edition, a British A5 print version, an e-book, a website copy, and a unique PDF version. Each is formatted differently and all are created at the same time.



As readers ourselves, we are always excited by physical copy and continue to overstuff our home bookshelves. The joy the authors have receiving the copy cannot be overstated. From a

practical standpoint it also allows us an avenue of additional revenue to try and diversify in case all our Patreon funding dries up. We only make a couple quarters on every sale but every dollar helps.

The ability to tap into Ingram's distribution network and be discoverable by booksellers and libraries for our wholesale discount may prove important in the future as our name gets out there. So far, we have only worked directly with independent and radical bookstores to stock *Radon* physically, but the reception has been lovely. We're in stores from California to Pennsylvania, across England and Wales, and also now in Helsinki, Finland.

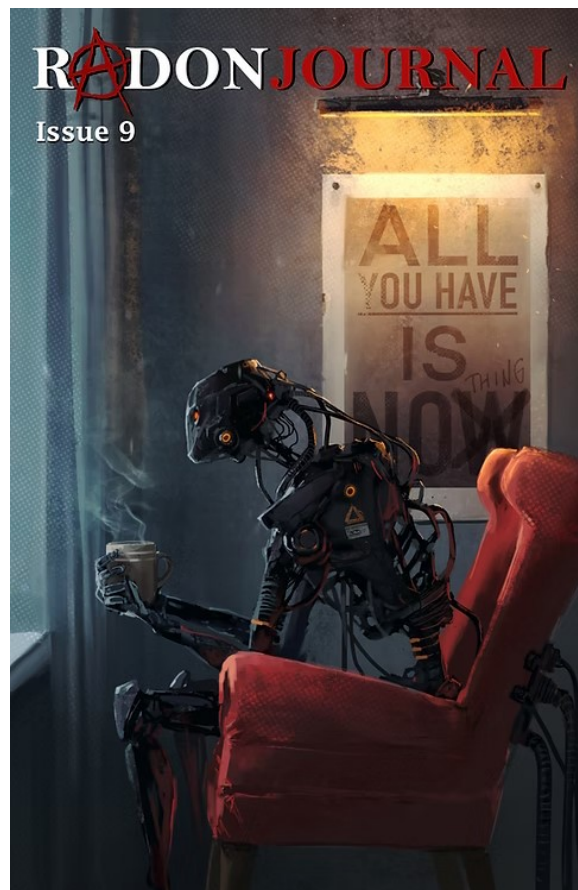
JPG - Tell us about the new Radon Art Gallery Contest?

Marin: The brainchild of Renee from our marketing team! Such a cool idea—we were all onboard immediately when she pitched it. We had great success with our first round, and I'm sure we're going to do more in the future. Art is something that a lot of our staff considers a gap in our programming, and while we'd love to include more art in our issues, we just aren't there budget-wise yet. The art contest is an attempt at beginning to bridge the gap further between our written art and visual art. The winning piece was amazing, by the way. A can of SPAM floating through the cosmic nether. What more could you want?

Aimer: We have found it difficult to properly break into the art community in the same way we have with the literary community. This has led to difficulty acquiring cover artists. The Art Gallery Contest was two-fold in its

idea: Aiming to reach into the art world and also allow a cross-pollination of story marketing. Writers love when visual art is paired with their work and we received huge support from our authors online. We started smaller with a few entries into our first contest and hope to make this a regular feature after every issue, so that artists can react to each new *Radon* issue and bring the communities closer together.

JPG - Radon Journal vows to "remain no-profit and transparent." What does this mean to you and does the magazine have plans to become a 501(c)?



Aimer: It means we have not and will never make a cent from *Radon* and that we will continue posting our yearly financial

statements. It is unlikely we will ever apply to be a non-profit 501(c)(3).

I helped get poetry non-profits off the ground before and so this attitude with *Radon* is a mixture of understanding the workload and defeatism. The process of registering a non-profit is an immense, years-long process. And the only reward is that you get to use the term “non-profit” and give yourself more work applying for grants. We’re not large enough for the tax-exemption to matter.

Frankly, I don’t believe that any city art council is going to give an anarchist journal a grant. State and federal government in the US is currently being looted and turned into a mafia state for the ruling class with the arts first to be defunded. We are already seeing creative enterprises that question authoritarian rules get cut off. Soon there will be no grants left to apply for. So to me it would be absurd to try registering. Instead, we’ll keep functioning as a not-for-profit collective and focus on our work.

JPG - What would you like authors to know about Radon Journal before submitting?

Marin: The main thing to consider when submitting is whether or not the story is a “*Radon* story.” Oftentimes we get generic science fiction submissions that actually go against the other themes that we publish. We have no qualms about accepting heavy science fiction that has no transhumanism in it, but we cannot accept science fiction that is *anti-transhumanist*. There is a bit of nuance when submitting to us, and often we wish authors would take more time to consider whether their piece would fit in with our existing works. So, yeah, also read some back

issues if you’re unsure! It’s a safe bet. Not to sound like a “pick-me” journal, but . . . we’re not like the other speculative journals.

JPG - What are you currently working on, and what's coming up next for you?

Marin: We’ve got a ton of cool stuff going on behind the scenes. As some of our readers may know, we’re making so many changes in Issue 10! We have gotten rid of our internal quotas and allowed submissions of up to 5,000 words. We have our new Artist-in-Residence program (currently Ninja Jo out of Ukraine), so we’re excited to see what cover art we’ll have in our remaining 2025 issues. Also, *Radon* will be attending conferences for the first time this year as an organization. I know Aimer will be in attendance at Balticon and Capclave, and most of our editorial staff is attending Philcon in November, where we’ll have a table and sell copies on-site. Overall, we’re making pretty big changes and hope to see them impact *Radon* positively. It’s all trial-and-error with an emerging journal, but we’ve got an excellent team.

Aimer: If 2024 was a year of change and growth for the journal, then 2025 is a year of refining. Perfecting our print issues and new production systems, fully training our new first readers and editors, attending our first conferences, enhancing our Patreon offerings, launching our first special Issue, aiming to achieve full funding, and being an integral part of the speculative poetry push.

Unlike other journals, *Radon* has always held sci-fi poetry equal to fiction, and we are excited to see the industry embrace it. This year marks the beginning of the Nebula

Award for Best Poem and the special Hugo Award for Poetry. Movement is already happening in the poetry scene to have the Hugo Award be permanent after 2025, and initiatives are being launched. We're excited to be part of journey and hope to see everyone at award shows soon.

<https://www.radonjournal.com/>

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Interview with Brian Townsley of Starlite Pulp



JPG - What were your motivations for starting Starlite Pulp?

BT - I was a writer at the time and had three poetry collections and a novel published, and was shopping a short story collection. I spoke with agents and publishers, and the process was not only slightly depressing, it was SO time consuming. So much of being a writer is sitting around waiting. Send a story off, wait months to hear. Send queries off, wait months to hear. Sometimes you don't hear back at all. And it occurred to me: I had already had a novel published, had a ton of short stories and poems placed in litmags all over, had won awards, and had experience in publishing as

well. Add in that I've got two amazing artists in my family, and it just all came together. Let's do this. Let's create our own thing. So, we did. It all sounds very simple, but it wasn't: First thing we came up with was the logo—the brass knuckles with the sparrow inside. Then we came up the Instagram account and some tee's, started the submission process for the first Review, and published that and my collection of shorts at the same time. We had no idea what the reception would be, but it's been amazing how supportive the community has been, and now we're nearly three years into this thing, and we've got 5 Reviews done (#6 will be out in June), a collection of novella's (*American Muse*), we reissued Danile Pyne's classic neo-noir *Twentynine Palms* this summer, and are in talks with other writers about future novels. And I see writers wearing our shirts and hoodies all the time. It's crazy.

JPG - What attracted you to publishing genres that fit under the pulp umbrella?

BT - Honestly, it's just most of what I've read, and enjoy. And I truly believe that includes most other people as well. As a young writer, especially one who attends a graduate writing program, as I did, you get this pressure of 'write literary fiction' all the time. That's bullshit. I have read enough short stories in litmags of middle-aged college professors in difficult marriages to last me a lifetime, and you know what? I don't remember any of them. I don't care. Now, you put a body in the backyard that IF the couple breaks up, they need to deal with...and all of a sudden, we have a noir story. That interests me. I live in real life. I

have a wife, and a job. I don't need to read about it. The Ford's and the DeLillo's and the Carver's (and I know I've just crossed a line, I have people tell me all the time that Carver is a third rail) are FINE. They're very good at what they do. But to me, it's also really fucking boring. You know what's interesting? Shit that shouldn't be happening, but is. Stuff that doesn't make sense, and writers that know how to express that. Whether it's King or Bradbury or Chandler or Jim Harrison or Walter Mosley or Stephen Graham Jones, that's what I want to read, and what I want to publish. And I don't publish any of those guys—but you get the point. They are all influences. Starlite Pulp is about publishing stories that live on the edges, but not simply to shock. Because those stories on the edge tell us more about ourselves than anything based in real life.

JPG - What types of today's fiction would you classify as pulp fiction, and what traditions of the old magazines are you bringing to your press?

BT - It's an interesting question, because a lot of today's contemporary fiction, and most of the stuff from the big houses, I would not necessarily consider pulp or noir. And they rarely even categorize them that way. The John Sanford's and Lee Child's of the world (protagonists Lucas Davenport and Jack Reacher, respectively) write what are most often referred to as 'thrillers'. Are they noir? Nah. But they sell a hell of a lot of books. And there are very few Sci Fi novels being sold as well by big houses. When was the last time you heard of a big Sci Fi novel? The Bradbury's and Dick's are long gone, and shit, name an author who has put out a big

Western novel besides McCarthy in the last 30 years. I'll wait.



That's the point. PULP encompasses all of that, but the big houses have simply turned their back on it. They publish the Connelly's (who is great) and a decent amount of crime fiction, but the other sub-genres have just fallen off the map. Left to self-publish, or go to small presses, like ours. So, as to the original prompt, what of today's fiction would I classify as pulp fiction? VERY little. Charles Ardai of Hard Case Crime, who is a friend of the label here, does a great job—but again, just crime fiction. And Horror definitely has an audience—the presses Terrorcore, Bad Hand, and others, they are moving that forward. But that still leaves the hybrids, the Westerns, and Sci Fi. Are we the answer for all of that? Goodness no. But we are certainly trying, with our Reviews and novella collections and the rest.

JPG - What kinds of stories are you looking for when you open to submissions for the Starlite Review anthologies?

BT - Everything under the pulp umbrella. Crime/detective/noir, horror, Sci Fi, westerns, and ALL of the hybrids in between. Growing up, I loved The Twilight Zone, Alfred Hitchcock Presents, Creepshow, Tales from the Crypt, and everything in between. Just loved the stories—never worried about what category it fit in. So that’s what we do.

JPG - Which of all the genres that you publish (SF, western, crime, horror, etc.) do readers respond to most?

BT - That’s a fascinating question. If you listen to awards and such, it’d be crime fiction. But that’s quite skewed, as I think there are more of those than almost anything else in pulp. But honestly, one of the most rewarding aspects I’ve had as an editor at this point is hearing feedback from a number of writers who generally write in crime fiction enjoying the other genre’s or ‘hybrids’ that we receive on a regular basis. I’ve even had a number of writers who have generally just written crime fiction all of a sudden want to write a western, or horror story, and that’s amazing. Look, one of the foundations of this at Starlite is thinking back to The Twilight Zone—yeah, sure, people looked at them as Sci Fi or horror in a way, but they are also difficult to categorize. And that’s the point: we publish traditional crime fiction, absolutely, but we also publish western horror, and Sci Fi noir, and everything in between. In many cases, the categories are silly. Just write a good story, in whatever world you see it in, and oftentimes other genres find their way in.

JPG - Last year, on top of the Reviews, you published a collection of novellas, do you

plan to continue publishing the American Muse collections?

BT - YES. Absolutely. There will be a Volume 2 coming, but it probably won’t be until 2026. We only have so much time here, and between the Reviews and the other projects we have working, it’ll be a bit. But that collection is one I’m quite proud of, and will definitely lead to another. I’m a huge fan of novellas, and feel that they are quite underappreciated, so at Starlite we’ll keep publishing those. And I look forward to that.

JPG - Why do you think that publishing novellas fell out of fashion for a while, but seem to be making a comeback?

BT - I have no idea, honestly. I can only speak to my own experience, and novellas have always been a favorite of mine. *Legends of the Fall* by Jim Harrison is an all-time favorite. *Revenge* in that collection is fantastic. Harrison, somehow, managed to publish a few novella collections in his time. No idea how he strongarmed his publishers into doing it. Point is, whenever you mention novella to an agent or publisher, they make the mark of the cross in your direction and run the other way.

As for ‘making a comeback’, I don’t know that either. Maybe they are. You are not the first person to say that, so it’s obviously coming from somewhere, but I guess I’m just in my own ignorant bliss. We publish them, and will continue to.

One last note: MANY of the books that we read when we were younger were considered novels but were actually novellas. *Shoot, Cannery Row, The Pearl* and *Of Mice and Men* are all maybe 130 pages or less. Many

Louis L'Amour novels come in at under 150 pages. Publishers these days wouldn't touch any of those, at that length. But those aren't considered novellas, somehow. Point is, ideas change. Just write.

JPG - What lessons has working as an editor taught you about writing fiction?

BT - Do what the submissions ask for, and don't make the editor's job harder than it needs to be. Writing can be a difficult process, I know. I do it regularly. But you send your story off to an editor, and he/she has SO many stories to read. If they ask for it in a certain fashion, do that.



Other than that, every writer knows that there is simply no greater repository of information and style and influence than simply *reading*. And Jake and I get to do a lot of that. So, I'm sure some of that impacts the work—how could it not?

I will say this, however. It's a 'writing 101' teaching tool, but also just a truism—you need to grab the reader early. We get stories as short as 3 pages and as long as 70+ pages (which is a novella, by the way), but if you haven't grabbed us by the first page, it means you haven't grabbed our reader's attention either. That first paragraph, and first page, *matters*.

JPG - What would you like authors to know about Starlite Pulp before submitting to your anthology calls?

BT - Submit early. Because the submissions are read in the order they are sent, and the issues themselves are shaped by the stories that are accepted first. Straight up. I look at shaping an issue the same way that I imagine an album is put together with its songs. There is a balance; and since we publish so many different sub-genres, I'm very careful in where I place them. So, being completely transparent here, if there are 3-4 noir/crime stories accepted in the first batch, it all of a sudden may be VERY difficult to publish one of those from there on, because we may be only aiming for 5-6 of those in the whole issue—and there may still be hundreds of stories to read. And there are NO quotas, besides this one: at least one 'type' makes it in every issue. So, if we've got one western and four crime stories and two Sci Fi and two horror and a western horror and a bizarre 'I don't know what to call it' and I'm still looking at stories...that's 11. We're not taking more than 14 or so. So, the 'rest' of the submissions, whether there are another 25 or 125, they have to make that cut. And yes, there are LOTS of stories that we (I am not the only editor here) have rejected that I have

thought about for a while after. They don't 'haunt' me, per se, but I certainly think about them. I remember them.

Also, *format your story*. And this isn't just applying to Jake and I here at Starlite, but anywhere. We get at least 20 stories an issue that include everything on the left margin, meaning nothing is indented. It is about the first thing I notice, and it always annoys me. Do not make the editor do more work than he/she needs to. If I publish one of those stories, and we have, a couple times, it means that I need to reformat the entire thing. So, you just put an obstacle in the way of that story being published. When was the last time you picked up a book and the dialogue is not indented? Probably never. Editors already have to read hundreds of stories—don't make it more difficult than it needs to be.

JPG - What are you currently working on, and what's coming up next for you?

BT - Oh, man. Well, with regards to events, we'll be at Bouchercon in New Orleans in August, then the 29 Palms Book Fest in November, where we'll be headlining another 'Noir in the Boneyard' reading, and have another reading early in '26 in the Palm Springs area.

As for books, we've got Reviews 6 & 7 coming out this year (June and December, respectively), the reissue of *Twentynine Palms* this summer, my next Sonny Haynes novel coming out whenever I finish the damn thing (pub will be maybe this winter, maybe spring), and a noir novel in 1970's Chicago with an author I won't name until it's officially announced, and another collection of novellas, hopefully in '26. Crazy times,

lots of work, but these are first world problems, man. We celebrate it. I enjoy the hell out of what I do here.

<https://www.starlitepulp.com/>

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Interview with Lesley Conner & Rebecca E Treasure of Apex Magazine



JPG - Congratulations on twenty years of Apex Magazine! What have been some of the biggest triumphs and challenges of running the magazine for so long?

LC - Thank you! 20 years is a huge milestone, and one I'm really excited to see. I've been with Apex for 13 years and it feels like we were celebrating 10 years just a few months ago. The biggest triumph is the authors. I've really come to appreciate just how many writers I've had the chance to work with and what being published in Apex means to them. I was at MoCon at the beginning of May and spoke with two authors who told me that Apex was their first pro sale, and that it was

a huge step forward in their writing careers. I love that we get to be that for so many people.



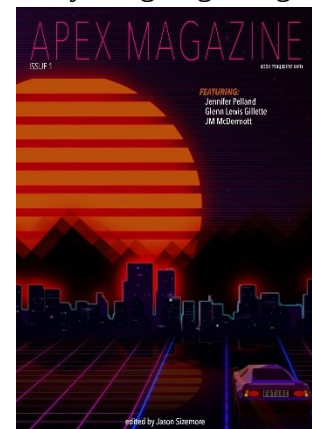
Biggest challenge: funding. Always funding. I wish this wasn't the case. I wish I could just put together each issue and the money to cover it was automatically there, but making sure we have the funds to do what we're doing is a struggle. I think about it constantly.

RET - Well, I've only been with Apex since 2020, when I started reading slush for the magazine. In 2021 I moved into the associate editor job, running the patreon along with the microfiction contest, and in 2023 I stepped into the managing editor position. That being said, I can somewhat confidently say that the biggest challenge is maintaining funding. It's a constant worry and stresser. Biggest triumphs? Well I'd say that lasting 20 years in genre publishing is a huge one! Also the community around Apex is really special to me - our Patrons and fans that have been with us for 20 years or since the relaunch.

JPG - In twenty years, what has been the most meaningful aspect of working with the SFFH community?

RET - Again, tough question for me at only 5 years, but for me, working with up and coming writers and making sure they have positive experiences, supported by the editorial team, emphasizing improving our transparency, accessibility, and diversity so that we always do better, making the future of genre stronger, is the most meaningful part of what I do.

LC - I'll echo what Rebecca said. I work really hard to make sure that Apex makes space for writers from all walks of life. I want writers to know that their experiences and stories have value, and that Apex wants stories from as many perspectives as possible. I also want readers to know when they come to Apex they're going to get stories from a diverse group of authors, stories that might challenge and push them out of their comfort zone. If I get to the place where we're publishing the same story from the same perspective over and over again, then I'll know it is time to step down and let someone else take over as editor-in-chief.



JPG - Apex publishes dark science fiction, fantasy, and horror, how would you define dark SF, and what is your attraction to darker stories?

LC - Dark speculative fiction can be a lot of things. For the most part, I feel like they're stories that explore a dark or negative emotion or action—whether that's grief, anger, injustice, frustration, hopelessness—all of these can twist an otherwise upbeat tale in a way that gives them a darker edge. And it's that edge that I'm attracted to. Whether it's a sharp dark blade that punches you in the gut and twists or a heavy, overbearing weight that holds you down. Both and everything in between are fantastic! I don't think I will ever tire of reading dark stories.

RET - I think people call stories dark for a lot of reasons. Sometimes dark means violent or gruesome in some way, sometimes dark means triggering, and sometimes dark means reflective of an element of society or humanity that rarely gets exposure. I am attracted to stories about the latter, especially, but there's something about a good body horror piece that just delights me even as I grimace away from the screen! I think it's important to turn over the rocks of society,



though, see what is lurking in the places we'd rather not see. Sometimes those things are beautiful, sometimes they're strange, sometimes they're shocking, but if we never look, we'll never deal with them.

Dark SF, for me, explores the potential impact of technology and the grounded reality of space exploration on human lives and personalities. It's not about the tech as much as the impact on people, what it means to them. See



[Papas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Slug Monsters](#) by Erika L. Satifka, or Derrick Boden's [Down the Dust Hatch](#) for an example of the dark science fiction we publish. A flash fiction example is Lyndsey Croal's [A Ring Around](#).

JPG - What are a few things you would like authors to know before submitting to Apex Magazine?

LC - Reading a few current issues of the magazine is the best thing you can do before submitting. It gives you the clearest idea of the types of stories that we're currently looking for. Also, make sure your story is speculative! If you can take the speculative part of your story out and the plot/theme/vibe stays the same, then we're probably going to pass. We want stories where the speculative part of the story is integral to the plot.

RET - Really, the same thing I'd want them to know about submitting to any magazine, which is read the magazine, and follow the

submission guidelines. Probably the most common reason for passing on a story is that it isn't "Apexy", and doesn't fit our pages. While we don't reject for formatting or not following guidelines, making the first readers' lives easier is always going to count in your favor.

JPG - What's coming up next for you, and what are you currently working on?

RET - Watch for the exciting publications coming from *Violet Lichen*, our eco novella imprint, and for another book from Jason Sanford later this summer. On the magazine side, we're focused on getting the magazines out on time and making sure our authors are taken care of.

LC - Our previously unpublished authors issue is coming out this July! I'm really excited about that. We're also working on a mini-issue or two that won't be available to read on the website. We only funded four issues for 2025 through our last Kickstarter, but we wanted to give a little something extra to the people who financially support Apex.



<https://www.apex-magazine.com/>

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Eaton Conference 2025 at University of California, Riverside



André Carrington, Phoenix Alexander, Andrew Lippert, Sandy Enriquez

On April 4th I had the pleasure of attending the Eaton Conference at the University of Riverside, California. I was a little late due to traffic, but I was able to catch a large group of presenters deliver papers on a wide variety of speculative topics concerning both books and film. Unfortunately, I missed the keynote speaker, and the second day of the conference, but I look forward to watching more online.

Earlier this year I also attended the Eaton's online symposium, and I'm thrilled that the conferences are finally back in action after a long hiatus. Some of the recordings of these events can be seen at

<https://www.youtube.com/@ucrlibraries>

I also caught up with conference organizer André Carrington to ask some follow-up questions about the work that the Eaton

Collection of SFF is doing and to learn more about the conference.

Interview with André Carrington Eaton Conference Organizer

JPG - The Eaton Conference was relaunched this year, when was the last conference and why the hiatus?

AC - The last conference was in 2017 in conjunction with the Science Fiction Research Association. One reason it has been a while was the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

JPG - What sparked your decision to bring the Eaton Conference back?

AC - Bringing it back was the prerogative of a dedicated team of grad students who had taken a seminar on speculative fiction studies focused on using the Eaton Collection and other archives. These emerging scholars are dedicated, resourceful, and committed.

JPG - What are the goals of the Conference?

AC - The goals are to put speculative fiction scholars and practitioners in dialogue in a forum that's free and open to the public, that welcomes research at all levels from undergraduates to senior faculty, and accessible -- which we are still working on.

JPG - How were the decisions made for what speakers would present and what topics would be covered?

AC - The selections were a combination of outreach to people who had participated in some previous virtual and hybrid events associated with speculative fiction at UCR and an open call for pre-organized panels as

well as individual presentations. We vetted submissions as a team.

JPG - What are the plans for future Eaton Conferences and are there plans to bring back the Eaton Journal of Archival Research in Science Fiction?



AC - There will be more conferences in the future, provided we have sufficient time and resources. This conference involved securing grants from the Center for Ideas and Society here at UCR and the University of California Humanities Research Initiative. The UCHRI funds activities across all the UC campuses. Sustaining the event in the future or relaunching the journal will require buy-in from institutional stakeholders like that and support for the people who do the work of coordinating it. For grad students to do this

work while completing dissertations, for example, they need secure employment and fellowships.

JPG - What role do you think the academic plays in the future of genre fiction?

AC - The role of academics is really up to us, as professors and students. We can review books, films, TV, comics, and performances, we can support our libraries and archives, and we can nurture creativity among our students. The higher education sector is under extraordinary pressure right now, including actual state-sponsored censorship, so it's up to our profession as a whole as well as everyone else who values reading and learning, to ensure it's possible for the arts to thrive.

<https://library.ucr.edu/collections/eaton-collection-of-science-fiction-fantasy>

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Unleash Your Imagination!
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Attention, visionary science fiction writers! Amazing Stories is thrilled to announce the reopening of short story submissions for our popular weekly feature, beginning **May 1, 2025**.

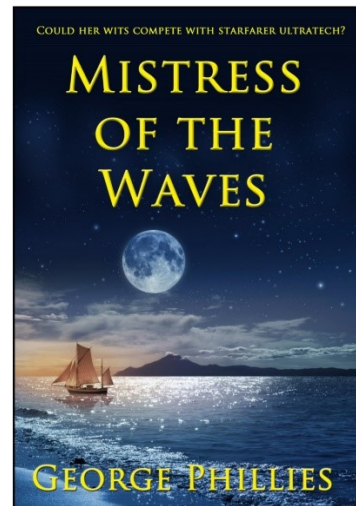
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*Also worth noting, we'll also be opening submissions later in 2025 for the special issue of **Amazing Stories 100th Anniversary** issue that will be published in 2026!*

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2025 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest
Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

To enter a story, on a separate page, please supply the following information, followed by your story:

- 1) Title of story (for identification): Author's name and address: Author's email address:
- 2) Answer DO or DO NOT I do/do not wish to become a public (no dues, no vote) member of the N3F and receive for free all N3F magazines.

Testify: I have read the rules for the 2025 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

We are here to encourage new writers, to reward the new kids on the block. 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. We want stories from guys and gals nobody's ever heard of...but in the years ahead, we will.

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 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, 2025.
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 2026. 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, 2025. Good luck!

