



The National **85** Fantasy Fan **Years**

Fandom's Second Oldest Print Publication
Cras ad Stellas — Tomorrow to the Stars
Volume 85 Number 4 April 2026

Trainor, Swycaffer Elected As Life Members

Presidential Proclamation

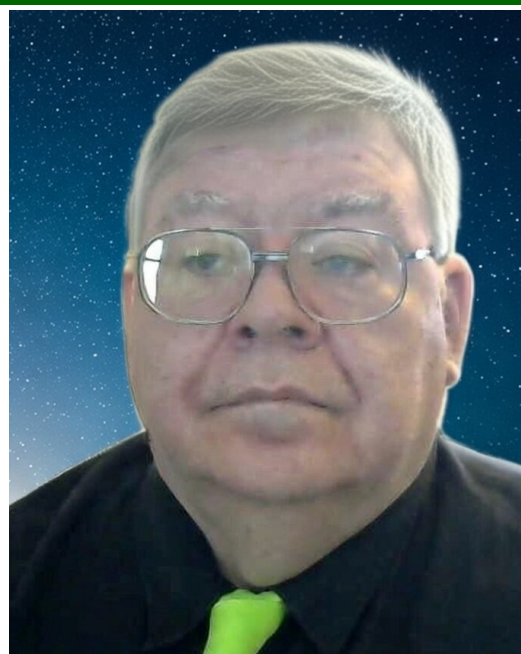
On behalf of the entire National Fantasy Fan Federation, and all of its members, past, present, and future, living, dead, and undead, congratulations to Jefferson Swycaffer and Kevin Trainor on their election by the Directorate as Life Members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

They join Jacqueline Lichtenberg and Jon Swartz as our living Life Members.

For the Federation,
George Phillies, President



Jefferson Swycaffer



Kevin Trainor

Your Volunteer Team

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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. LXXXV Number 4, April 2026, 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, please 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 12th of the month.

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New Life Members

Jefferson Swycaffer writes of his promotion to the ranks of the Life Members:

As Hank McCoy would say, "My stars and garters!" This is the nicest thing that's happened to me in an age of ages. Thank you, and thanks to the Directorate, and thanks to all the N3F! I've enjoyed being a member, and, most especially, I have enjoyed the very great privilege of coordinating the Short Story Contest, which is a source of inspiration every year. The N3F is inspiring withal! May the Great Bird of the Galaxy find warmth in all our hearts!

I will continue to pay dues, because it's fun, and a way to honor and support the club.

Sincerely, Jefferson

Kevin Trainor (wombat-socho on the internet) writes: I am not worthy!

For the curious, Life Memberships are defined in the Bylaws and granted by vote of the Directorate; the limit on how many living Life Members we may have is five. There are also Life Members who have advanced to the next plane of existence, but I do not have a good list of those.

Laureate Award Nominations

Here we have what I believe to be the complete set of nominations for the N3F Laureate Awards. Please check to see that your nominations have not been missed. Please comment on these in any N3F Zine/

For several categories, the number of nominations is large, more than five, so we will need a round of preliminary balloting to shorten the ballot, I expect in the June issue. Followed by a final round of balloting, I expect in the July issue. If you made a nomination, please speak up as to why you made that choice.

Best Fan Writer:
Lloyd Penney
Niall Shapiro

Best Fan Artist:
Jose Sanchez
Tiffanie Gray

Best Fan Editor:
Bob Jennings - Fadeaway
Rob Carroll - Dark Matter Ink

Best Fan Poet:
Denise Dumars
Robert Frazier

Best Fan Website:
Ansible
Fanac
Galactic Journey

Best Non-N3F Fan Publication:
Ancillary Review of Books
Nerds of a Feather
The Obdurate Eye
Pablo Lennis
Unofficial Hugo Book Club

Best N3F Fan Publication:
Eldritch Science
N'APA
The N3F FanActivity Gazette

Best Novel (over 100,000 words):
Heart of the Mountain by Larry Correia
A Kiss for Damocles by J. Kenton Pierce
All that We See or Seem by Ken Liu
The Book of Lost Hours by Hayley Gelfuso
Extinction by Michael Simon
First Command by Michael Simon
Katabasis by R. F. Kuang

Best Shorter Work (under 100,000 words) or Anthology
A Tide of Paper by Leah Cypess
The Chronolithographer's Assistant by Suzanne Palmer:
Crystal Singer's Song by David Weber
The Dagger in Vichy by Alastair Reynolds
Disgraced Return of Kap's Needle by Renan Bernardo

Best Poem or Collection:
Life During the Lazarus Age by Robert Frazier

Best Book Editor:

Eric Fomley — Shacklebound Books
 Cedar Sanderson — Raconteur Press Boys Books
 Jenni Hill -- Orbit
 Lindsey Hall -- Tor
 Oliver Dougherty -- Tor
 Toni Weisskopf — Baen Books

Best Pro Artist:

Bob Eggleton
 Dante Luiz
 Bruce Pennington
 Cedar Sanderson

Best TV show, film or video\

Star Trek: Strange New Worlds -- Paramount
 Superman -- Warner
 Wicked: For Good -- Universal

Best Historical Work:

A Selection of Golden Age Science Fiction and
 Fantasy Artists by Coker and Swartz
 Dreaming of Autonomous Vehicles: Miloslav
 (Miles) J. Breuer: Czech-American Writer and the
 Birth of Science Fiction by Jaroslav Olša, Jr.
 The Martians by David Barron, Publisher:
 Liveright
 Women of the Fairy Tale Resistance by Jane Har-
 rington

Best Literary-Critical Work

Playing at the World Volume 2 by Jon Peterson

Best None of the Above:

Story Hour (<https://www.storyhour2020.com>)
 (vote will be Yes or No).

Our Treasurer Reports

Paypal balance \$157.91
 In: \$18 from registrations (less fees)
 NSB balance: \$2540.34

4 life members
 26 electronic + 13 regular = 43 voting members
 8 archive members + 261 public members = 269
 non-voting members

Welcome to Michael Brown!

Expiring this month: Casey Aimer, Jean-Paul Gar-
 nier

Son of Silvercon IV

Neffers are reminded that preregistration for Son of
 Silvercon IV has begun! The \$5 discount for N3F
 membership is available again. Attending member-
 ships are \$40 (through June 15), supporting member-
 ships are \$20, vendor tables are \$50, and sponsor-
 ships \$100. Mail checks & money orders to Friends
 of Fission-chan, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049;
 PayPal payments go to fission.chan@gmail.com

Jeffrey Redmond, 1954-2024

I regret to report that long-time Science Fiction Fa-
 cebook Group lead administrator Jeffrey Redmond
 passed away in 2024. We only learned recently.

In the Mystery of Death all men are initiates.

Letters of Comment

My dearest fellow Neffers:

After downloading and reading the March 2026 issue
 of the National Fantasy Fan (Vol. 85 #3), I write to
 share some sad news with our membership. Long-
 time member of the National Fantasy Fan Federa-
 tion, former head of at least two bureaus, and other-
 wise active fanzine fan, fanwriter, and fanned John
 Thiel died in late March. His brother Eric posted an
 obituary to the Facebook in early April:

OBITUARY: John William Thiel III

John W. Thiel III, of 30 N. 19th Street, 81, died on
 March 25, 2026, in hospice care at IU Arnett Hospi-
 tal, suffering from metastatic cancer.

John was born on August 6, 1944, the same day the
 US dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, in Gary,
 Indiana, to John W. Thiel II and Joyce Ida Thiel,
 both deceased. He was the oldest of four brothers,
 Mark (deceased), Eric, and Kurt.

As a young child, John read widely, both classical literature and genres like science fiction and fantasy. While in his early teens, he began publishing fanzines for science fiction and fantasy, printing his earliest ones on a hectograph and, later, on a mimeograph. John served in the US Army for two years in the early 1960s in Germany but was discharged after developing schizophrenia. He travelled to both New York and San Francisco afterwards, following the beatnik culture of the early 1960s, and developed a love for jazz of all genres.

By the end of the '60s John had moved back to Lafayette, Indiana, with his parents and youngest brother Kurt, living at 30 N. 19th St., where he lived for the rest of his life, sometimes alone and sometimes with his younger brother Mark and Mark's children after Mark's death in 2016, which occurred on the same day and month that John died on in 2026.

John had continued publishing science fiction and fantasy magazines, including Pablo Lennis and a Web zine called Surprising Stories, which published 54 thrice-yearly issues for 17 years. He also read poetry occasionally at local bars. He was also a founding member of the Hells Tunas Motorcycle Club.

He is missed by his two surviving brothers and the children of all three brothers as a unique individual in their lives.

I mostly knew John through the N3F, though I was also, later, a reader of Pablo Lennis. During my time with the N3F, John served as the bureau chief for our Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau, editing Ionisphere, and our Fandom Introductory Bureau—later the History and Research Bureau—editing Origins. He served on the directorate of the N3F, including at least one term as its chairman. He also participated in our amateur press alliance, N'APA, and received the Kaymar Award in 2017 and the Franson Award in 2022.

John was also active in fandom outside the N3F. According to Fancyclopedia 3, John published his first fanzine in 1956 at the age of 12. He was a member of the Cult, founded the apa SLAPHAPA in 1977, and was a member of the Lafayette Interstellar Association. That local club met weekly and published a

clubzine titled Vor Zap. John also published An Index to Popular American Fanzines. Select back issues of Pablo Lennis are available at Fanac.org. Archives of his Web zine Surprising Stories are available at <https://efanzines.com/Surprising>.

In 2019, the editors of Bewildering Stories interviewed John. (bewilderingstories.com/issue820/thiel_interview.html) Lawrence Dagstine's fond remembrance of John, one of the writer's first editors, is also worth reading. (medium.com/@ldagstine/lawrence-dagstine-a-goodbye-to-my-first-editor-john-thiel-of-pablo-lennis-eb067c9888e9)

I will miss John. I will miss his fanwriting, his fanzines, the artwork of Peter Zenger—which graced several covers of APA-L and might have been John's own pseudonymous work—and the energetic approach he brought to his fan activity and publishing fanzines. And I condole with his surviving family members. The death of John Thiel leaves a gap in our lives, as well as in the broader world. Thank you to Jean-Paul L. Garnier for editing Ionisphere and Samuel Lubell for editing Origins.

With the Laureate Award Nominations published in this issue of The Fan, I propose that we recognize Pablo Lennis with the Laureate for Best Non-N3F Fan Publication as one last fannish hurrah for John. The posthumous recognition would be an appropriate accolade for a lifetime of fanac.

Putting it on a tight beam,
Blasted Heath Row

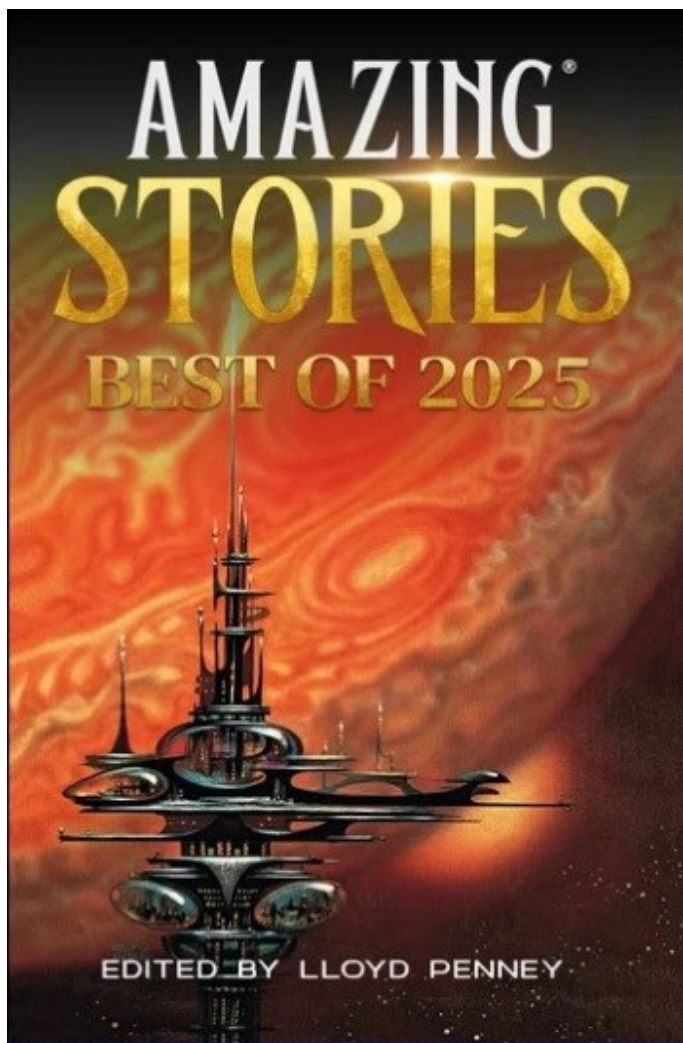
Dear George:

I've got The National Fantasy Fan Vol. 85, No. 3, and I've also got some comments to make here... with some luck, they might also make sense. I am so sleep-deprived...

My loc...the 100th anniversary of Amazing Stories' first issue has come. April will see a massive celebration at Ravencon in Virginia, plus in Toronto, an evening discussion at the Merrill Collection of SF, Fantasy, and Horror, and I will be there. The Best of 2025 is now available.

Dani Zweig's letter...on my Facebook feed, there's been a cautionary notice for authors to keep their egos in check, for in today's book market, odds are heavily against you. Odds are that the average reader has not read your current book or any of your books, didn't know about any of your books, or have never seen or even heard of you. Just keep up the marketing of your books, and keep on plugging. As was said elsewhere, the field has simply become too large, and while we do have some busy authors, and fairly big names, we no longer have Big Names like Asimov, Clarke, Bradbury and Heinlein.

I will attach to this letter a graphic of the cover of *Amazing Stories: Best of 2025*, with artwork from everyone's favourite gremlin, Frank Kelly Freas. I think Kelly would like such art on this 650+-page book.



I think I have run out, to be honest. I have some pressures on me to get more done for the next issue

of the magazine, which should be up and running quite shortly. I need a big break in the thunderstorms we've been getting, and a day where I can concentrate on this without other interruptions. Thanks for this issue, see you with the next.

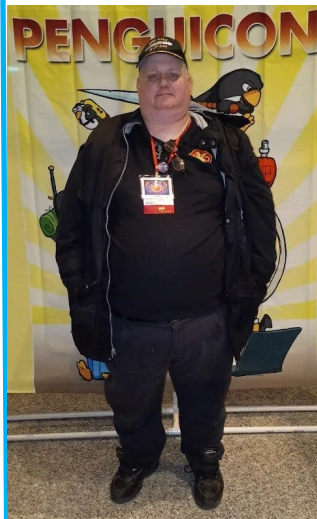
Yours,
Lloyd Penney

Urgent News! Major Disruption In SF Distribution

According to its March 16 Chapter 11 filing, Baker & Taylor checked boxes listing its number of remaining creditors as between 1,000 and 5,000; estimated remaining assets between \$1 million and \$10 million; and estimated remaining liabilities between \$100 million and \$500 million dollars, suggesting the remaining creditors will receive just a small fraction of any monies owed.

Conventions Penguicon After Action Report

My apologies for not having my good side photographed. I totally would have, but I don't have one. At any rate...



Ladies and gentleman, they fixed it. It makes me extremely happy to say that. I see you out there, wondering who fixed what. It's a valid question so let me help you out.

Back in what seems to be a former life but was actually only a few years ago (2012 and 2013) I went to a local convention that claimed to be all about Science Fiction, Fantasy, and technology. The reason it was called Penguicon was because the symbol of the Linux operating system is a penguin. It's really that simple. That's what I thought I was getting when I showed up.

What I got, lo those many years ago, was something

different. There were very many panels regarding a type of activity that I have participated in (I have two daughters after all) but do not blog about. Please note that I'm not kink shaming. I just happen to think that those types of conventions should be their own thing, held in places where a non-consenting public does not have to see a dom leading their sub around on a dog chain. I guess I'm old fashioned that way.

But the new Penguicon has fixed that problem totally. It has gone from a con that never specifically banned children under twelve but encouraged people to leave them home to a con with a teen track and a table where a real Girl Scout sold Girl Scout cookies. (I'm Team Samoas.) I really think that it's important to make cons family friend for parents, but also for the future of our hobby. Making cons a safe space for rugrats is the absolute best way to do that. I love Penguicon for doing so.



But it gets better. I go to cons because I've been a fan for literally decades. I used to drive my elementary school librarian to distraction because, "There is no Science Fiction section. Fiction is alphabetical by author's last name." (For the record, I still think that's dumb. If bookstores can shelve their fiction by category libraries can, too.) The fact remains that I always found it somehow. It may not have been until I got into high school that I even realized that there was such a genre as "Fantasy," but it's been over thirty years since I graduated, so I feel like I've got some experience there too.

I can hear you out there. The dozens....

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAND

DOOOOOOOOOOOOZENS of the Jim's fans chanting his name...

JIM-BO!

JIM-BO!

JIM-BO!!

And wondering if Penguicon got its Science Fiction and Fantasy right. To which, I have no choice except to reply that

OH MY GOD YOU GUYS!!! THEY HAD DAVID WEBER AND JIM BUTCHER AT THE SAME CON!! THEY FREAKING OWNED IT!!!
AHM

Are you kidding me? Now, I haven't read much Butcher in awhile, mainly because I learned about him from this pretty lady and we don't really talk anymore and well...

You get the idea.

Dude's an amazeballs author. His stuff is tainted by the sting of love lost for me.

Or sumfin'.

Listen, read his stuff. He's worth your time. And dude, he's a freaking superstar and he was at the con I was at and it was only twenty minutes from home...

Yeah, awesome.

And of course I'm a member of The Royal Manti-coran Navy: The Official Honor Harrington Fan Association, so of course getting to see the author that writes the Honor Harrington series in person was freaking huge. Getting to hang out with a bunch of my friends from the org was awesome too. The thing I love about cons is that they're like the cool part of high school: I actually get to see a bunch of my friends in one place and we do fun stuff. Does it get any better?

Okay, so we were still working out the details at this point, but we got it together.

Of course there was a lot of other stuff, too. There were very many panels with a whole ton of panelists. I spent most of my time attending panels from the writing track because I'm trying to get this novel finished and I need all the help I can find figuring out how to get it published. (And you can read it before it comes out by becoming a paid subscriber.) Plus there was stuff about publishing and how to get involved in writing for gaming. That sounded like something I'd probably enjoy, even if it doesn't sound like it pays a whole lot.

The problem with any con is that it is physically freaking impossible to get to everything you want to do. There's not enough time in the day, there's the event that runs at the same time as the panel you wanted to attend, and the author you wanted to talk to wasn't in the bookstore when you walked in... Yup, totally happened to me. There was a chance to see a publisher speak at the same time I got a chance to hang out with David Weber. I went to chill with David. I'd do it again. There was a set up where you could learn how to make your own flashy thing covered in LED lights using a soldering iron. I don't know what they're actually called but it looked really cool. I wanted to do it but I was always doing something else.

And this is a good thing. It can be a bit frustrating sometimes not being able to get to everything but that's ten trillion times better than sitting around bored with nothing else to do. The Convention Committee managed to find enough people to lead enough panels to keep a guy like me busy for three freaking days without my being able to get to most of what they offered. This despite the fact that I got to most of what I wanted to do.

I'm pretty sure I'm supposed to mention the Con Suite. If you're not familiar, that's a place where you can go and get snacks and beverages that you don't have to pay for as long as you've paid to get into the convention. It was great. They had a really good selection of both snacky type stuff (the pickle in a bag was excellent) and beverages (make mine Mountain Dew, please.) I felt bad for the woman who was working when I went in there. (I didn't get her name and as a former server I feel embarrassed admitting that.) She was running hard and struggling to keep up but she got the work done. You know, con work-

ers are volunteers and make zero dollars and zero cents, but they should AT LEAST quadruple that woman's wages. She's earned it.

Oh, and they used a website called Sched to post their schedule which included a way to make my personal schedule and which emailed me a copy of all the stuff I had decided to do that day which linked to the website for details like location and descriptions, etc. That was a good decision. I'm a big fan of Sched now, too.

At closing ceremonies, they announced that they were going to have to check on how things worked out financially before they could decide whether they were going to have another con next year. I'm here to tell you that they'd better have one, because I'm going. So proclaimeth the Jimbo!

Bottom Line: 5.0 out of 5 Autographed Novels

Your President Reports

First, congratulations to Kevin Trainor and Jefferson Swycaffer for their election to the ranks of living Life Members. They have surely earned their elections. Without their contributions, the Federation would surely be in a difficult position. As a minor aside: Until we have significantly more than 100 dues-paying or Life Members, the Constitution and Bylaws limit us to a maximum of five life members. Please do not expect more elections soon.

Our main activity as a club remains the publication of fanzines. Most of them are coming out on time with the fine range of material. We occasionally have an editor who was discovered there is this thing called life and that he or she must deal with it before advancing towards producing another issue of his or her magazine. This is a normal situation for fan organizations.

I must agree that our last half-year has been excessively interesting. Our web pages were hacked and eradicated. Fortunately, backup files were available, though the backup support from our web service provider was less than optimal. We also had irregular difficulties with fanzine mailings, and must be grateful to Jason Hunt for taking over the responsibility of mailing all of our zines.

On the bright side, I am gradually passing zine editorships over to other members. Mindy Hunt took over the N3F Fan Gazette and made it a much better magazine. Steve Condrey has taken on publishing Eldritch Science, and is giving us better fiction on a much more regular basis. Tightbeam, our review zine, has had modest irregularities in the supply of good material, but I have managed to bring it out more or less on time every month. I would be happy to have someone take over editing and publishing Tightbeam. The N3F Review Of Books Incorporating Prose Bono took a serious hit on how much material we had available. All I can say is that there are many politically centrist and conservative writers and fen who complain about the lack of attention to their books and other material, but somewhat fewer of them are willing to write the needed reviews. On the bright side, thanks to Jean Lamb, our supply of material from reviewers interested in more liberal authors has greatly improved. I wish I did not have to describe writers and reviewers as liberal or centrist or conservative or whatever, but unfortunately that is the real world in which we appear to be stuck.

Last year, many of your officers and bureau heads had a meeting to discuss things that could or should be done to improve the N3F. The point was made that our webpages look like the hottest thing in 1995-era web formatting. Volunteers to improve the situation have been somewhat thin on the ground, partially because several of our real activists have had medical issues. Indeed, we have sadly reached the point where death notices for current members are probably going to become more common than they have been in the past.

We did identify a series of activities that would give us a better club, if only some number of members were willing to perform them. We would benefit by having a Welcoming Bureau, a Multimedia Bureau, a NefferCon Bureau, a Professional Support Bureau, and a Social Media Bureau. The Welcoming Bureau would target putting the N3F name in front of the fannish public, for example at cons. Indeed, we now have members who attend conventions regularly and have volunteered to take N3F Fliers and bookmarks to the conventions that they attend. The Professional Support Bureau is working on projects. Jason and Mindy Hunt expressed an interest in the Multimedia Bureau, but are temporarily too busy. We do have an

online science fiction convention, NefferCon, visible on MeWe. It needs a good convention host or two. We do have members who do multimedia presentations or podcasts. Perhaps some of them could be persuaded to let us use that material for NefferCon. Our visibility on social media is irregular. I do occasionally put up flyers for our short story contest or or simply advertising the club, but I have only so many hours in the day and at the moment and busy writing another novel.

Yes, to briefly blow my own horn, with the inspiration of one of our members I tracked down the current heir of the literary rights to the work of the late James Schmitz. I was able to obtain the right to publish additional work using his universes. Of course, this has already been done once. Eric Flint and friends obtained the rights to write sequels to the Witches of Karres. I have obtained the rights to write sequels using Telzey Amberdon and other characters from the Hub Universe. I'm currently above 90,000 words on my current effort. Curiously, I seem to get strong positive responses from people I know to be professional SF writers.

Letter

Editors:

I rejoined N3F as a voting member. I do not have good ideas about the stagnation problem. Half a century ago (let alone decades more), fantasy fandom and its publications served different needs than today's: The fantasy tent was much smaller, and being a fan of fantasy was more likely to mean the same things to more people. In the absence of internet / usenet / bitnet, if you wanted to communicate with fellow fans you had to organize meetings or mailings. Today, the fantasy tent is large and fragmented, and there is likely to be little overlap in what people have read, played, watched - or are even aware of. I recently watched a youtube video whose presenter was identifying noteworthy or iconic fantasy novels from various stages in the history of the genre. I was amused to note that I'd read about 50 of his 75 pre-Tolkien picks, 80 of 125 in his 1960-1989 category -- and some 40 out of 300 of his later picks. I don't think I'm reading less than I used to.

- Dani Zweig

Ionisphere

The next issue of Ionisphere will be a series of interviews with a handful of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Association's Grand Master poets. Speculative poetry is on the rise and I'm looking forward to speaking with some of the amazing poets in the field. My research for the SFFH directory continues, and after releasing the magazine part of the directory I will be rolling out other sections of interest. Last week I made the digital versions of the certificates for the Franson Award winners as well as the short story contest winners, they are currently being printed by our President, so keep an eye out for those in the mail. I also continue my personal research into 1950s SF author T. D. Hamm, with hopes to release a collection of her work later this year. Any information from fen who might have known her would be greatly appreciated.

...Jean-Paul Garnier

Art Bureau

So, as far as activity is concerned on my end, there hasn't been any, so I don't really have anything new to report but I can say that if any artists in the N3F have any artwork to contribute, please send it directly to me, Jose Sanchez (jose77sanchez@yahoo.com) for viewing and possible use. It could make its way to the covers or interiors of the many fine fanzines that the N3F is currently producing right now. Your contributions are very much appreciated !

...Jose Sanchez

Our Other Zines

A Gentle Stroll

(showing the number of pages in each contribution)

Out of Time by Tiffanie Gray ... 1
 Collation File ... The Collator Supreme ... 1
 Ronin Engineer ... Jim Eckman ... 6
 Mloki ... Clark B Timmins ... 3
 The Fox's Den ... N.C. Shapero ... 69
 A Rhodomontadulous Promenade ... George Phillies ... 5

Eldritch Science -- March 2026

Front Cover ... Harper's Lament by Angela K. Scott
 Back Cover ... In Wolves Tread by Angela K. Scott

Fiction

3 ... Supply Chains by Adrian Kresank
 7 ... Cladosporium by Isak Laestander
 15 ... For Everyone's Welfare by Charles Walter
 32 ... Midsummer's Eve in the Virtual Reality
 By Arvida Svenske
 36 ... Thinking Cells by Jack Huo

The N3F Fan Gazette

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 March New Books | Walter Bruce Sinclair – 6 April
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 Saturn Awards Announced | Jason Hunt – 19
 Sci-Fi Pro & Fan Birthdays | Jason Hunt – 31
 April Conventions | Mindy Hunt – 32

N'APA

The numbers after the author names are the number of pages in each contribution.

Front Cover: AI Generated Fantasy Art
 The Official Organ #281
 Intermission 163, by Ahrvid Engholm - 26
 Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer - 3
 The Swamp Spot Sentinal, by Robert Jennings – 25
 Intermission 164, by Ahrvid Engholm - 26
 The Murdered Master Mage, by George Phillies - 6
 Brownian Motion #18, by Garth Spencer - 6
 Moziag #1, by Joseph P. Gill - 7
 Brandy Hall Issue 17, March 2026, by Mark Nelson - 17
 R.A.I.L. #11 by Adrian Kresnak - 2
 Esmeralda County Line #15, February - March 2026, by Kevin Trainor Jr - 6
 Samizdat Ish #36, March/April 2026, by Samuel Lubell – 16

2026 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 following rules for the 2026 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 2027. 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, 2026. Good luck!



Trainor, Swycaffer Elected As Life Members

Laureate Award Nominations

Our Treasurer Reports — Son of Silvercon IV

Jeffrey Redmond, 1954-2024

Letters of Comment

Heath Row — Lloyd Penney

Urgent News! Major Disruption In SF Distribution

Conventions — Penguicon After Action Report

Your President Reports

Letter from Dani Zweig

Ionisphere — Art Bureau

Our Other Zines

N3F TNFF
c/o George Phillips
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester MA 01609

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