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Edited and published by John Thiel, 30 North 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904. Contact Origin at kinethiel@mymetronet.net or at street address. Origin is distributed along with The National Fantasy Fan and may be found at <http://efanzines.com>

Staff members of the bureau

John Thiel, head of bureau, address above

Jon Swartz, historical assistant, 12115 Missel Thrush Ct., Austin, Texas 78750, email at jon_swartz@hotmail.com

Judy Carroll, correspondent, 976 East 120 South, Spanish Fork, Utah, 84660, email at AutumnSeas8012@yahoo.com

Joe Napolitano, general fandom contact, 4036 N. Nora Avenue, Covina, California 91722-3820, email justjoeguytwo@aol.com



“Man in the Moon”. Cartoon by Daniel Slaten

EDITORIAL



Can we make it work?

Sometimes a great notion has died, or perished, because the people involved with it simply had not enough initiative to carry forth their ideas and make them into realities. This has not been true with the N3F, which has survived for half a century and a score of years more, through some pretty rough going. The makers of this organization knew how to put their imprint on science fiction's history and how to make their notion last. However, it did not survive entirely by itself, and each passing decade has had different problems with which to contend, and many different individuals to contend with them.

At the present we are faced with the problem of a dwindling interest in science fiction as such, and of course we could allow our own interest to dwindle and not be concerned with this problem—but it is much more satisfying to see what we can do to make things better. The N3F is an excellent workplace to work with science fiction and its problems. Let us rekindle our own interests and see what more we can bring forth from this basically fallow field of interest.

Starts must have conclusions, but I think re-starts are also in order, with any matters of continuing interest, and I think science fiction is just such a matter.

Historical Vignette

by Jon D. Swartz



What Is Science Fiction Fandom?

At one time the N3F Welcoming Committee was a very active part of the club, even issuing publications of its own. This undated booklet—only three and a half by five and a half inches in size and forty-eight pages in length (counting covers)—apparently was sent to every new member of the club and had the following printed on the cover:

Presented by the Welcoming Committee, National Fantasy Fan Federation. What this little booklet lacked in size, however, it made up for in content. The club members attempting to answer the question posed by the publication's title were Al Ashley (Michigan), Don Wollheim (New York), Harry Warner, Jr. (Maryland), Bob Tucker (Illinois), Forrest J. Ackerman (California), and Milton A. Rothman (Washington).

Al Ashley ("Introduction"—What fandom is to most fans) was a fan from Battle Creek, Michigan, who later in life moved to Los Angeles. He worked as a taxi driver so he could have more time to think of things other than work. One of the things he thought about in Battle Creek was the idea of a Slan Center, a home for fans. He and his wife, Abby Lu, lived for a time with other fans in a house known as the Slan Shack. Ashley Authored the **Michicon Booklets** in 1943-1945, and in the early 1940s was ranked among the top 25 fans in the country.

Don Wollheim ("A Brief History of Fandom"—history from 1929 until the mid-1940s) was one of the founding members of the Futurians as well as a charter member of the N3F. He was an early fan, editor, and author, writing under several pseudonyms. His first *genre* publication was "The Man from Ariel" in **Wonder Stories** (January, 1934); his first novel was THE SECRET OF SATURN'S RINGS (Winston, 1954), and his first collection of

stories was TWO DOZEN DRAGON EGGS (Powell, 1969). Donald Allen Wollheim is credited with editing the first anthology of science fiction, THE POCKET BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION (Pocket Books, 1943) and the first collection of science fiction novels, PORTABLE NOVELS OF SCIENCE (Viking, 1945). He won many awards, including a Hugo as publisher in 1964 and a Worldcon Special Convention Award (for “the fan who has done everything”) in 1975. He was a member of First Fandom (Hall of Fame, 1975) and was inducted posthumously in 2002 into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame. In 1971 he established DAW Books, the first major publisher specializing exclusively in science fiction.

Harry Warner, Jr. (“Present Day Organizations”—fan clubs in the 1940s) was a well-known Maryland fan, known in fannish circles as “The Hermit of Hagerstown”. He began reading science fiction in the mid-1930s and published his first LoC in **Astounding Science Fiction** in 1936. He started publishing fanzines in late 1936; his first was **Spaceways**, which lasted four years. He then published **Horizons** for many years, beginning in 1939. He was a member of the N3F, published the first issue of **Bonfire**, the club’s first fanzine, and won the Kaymar Award in 1978. He was an indefatigable letter-writer and also wrote two books on fandom, ALL OUR YESTERDAYS (1969) and A WEALTH OF FABLE (1976). He was a member of First Fandom and was inducted into the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 1995.

Bob Tucker (“Fan Publications”—the history of fan publishing) was an early fan who stayed active for many years, publishing his own fanzines: **The Planetoid**, 1932, **Science Fiction Newsletter**, **D’Journal**, **Le Zombie**, 1938-1943; his full name was Arthur Wilson Tucker, but he was known in fandom as “Bob”. His first publication was “Interstellar Way Station” in **Super Science Novels Magazine** (May, 1941), his first book, PRISON PLANET (Pegasus, Summer 1947), his first novel, THE CITY IN THE SEA (Rinehart, 1951), and his first collection, THE SCIENCE FICTION SUB-TREASURY (Rinehart, 1954). He was a recipient of many awards, including a Hugo (Best Fan Writer, 1970), John W. Campbell, Jr. Memorial Award (Special) for THE YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN, 1976, Skylark Award, 1986, First Fandom Hall of Fame, 1985, E.E. Smith Memorial Award, 1986, and SFWA Author Emeritus, 1996.

Forrest J. Ackerman (“Fantasy Flanguage”—Fan language of the time) was widely recognized during his lifetime as THE science fiction/fantasy fan, and received the Hugo Award in 1952 as Number One Fan Personality. His philanthropic contributions to

fandom were legendary. He is credited with creating many of the fan terms currently in use, including "Sci-Fi". At one time he had one of the world's most complete *genre* collections, which he housed in the Ackermansion. Recipient of many fan awards, in 2002 he received a World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement. He was a lifetime member of both the N3F and First Fandom.

Milton A. Rothman ("Your Place in Fandom"—Activities of fans) was co-founder of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society. He received a PhD. In physics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1952. In 1938 he published "Holocaust" in **Science Adventure Stories #2**, followed by two stories in **Astounding** in 1939, "Heavy Planet" and "Shawn's Sword" under the pseudonym of Lee Gregor. He served as chair of two different Worldcons. His son is Tony Rothman, also a physicist and science fiction author.

Some Conclusions

Although no publication date is given, internal evidence indicates that this small booklet was issued in the mid-1940s, probably in 1944. For one thing, E.E. Evans is mentioned as club president, and he held the office during 1943-1945. Also, the articles included cite events that ended in the mid-1940s. This small booklet is a memorable club publication and a remarkable one to have been issued by the N3f's Welcoming Committee.

TO RIDE THAT MAGIC DREAM by Will Mayo

And yet, as a child, I dreamed of those magic carpet rides, those rocket ships to far off Mars, and, oh, how I flew. I saw distant deserts, golden palaces such as Kublai Khan might've built, a thousand acres of untilled land and maidens just for the taking. Ah, but then I woke to the drudgery of this life. One child's misfortune to dream, but, lo, he dreams still...

DICKENS' GHOSTS by Will Mayo

I'm told, too, that Charles Dickens, author of all those nineteenth century serials, used to stroll through graveyards, right there in London, and steal named of the dead from the headstones for his characters. The dead were overwhelmed and grateful for the newfound fame and haunted him all of his days....

Definitions of Fandom researched by John Thiel



From **Fanlore History** <https://fanlore.org/Wiki>

The first real “fandom” as we think of it today was probably the Conan Doyle fandom back in the 1900s through 1920s—which mainly consisted of people sending newsletters through the post. Essentially, one person would host the newsletter, and everyone associated would send letters to them about their work or their thoughts. These would be typed up and mimeographed, then the completed newsletter would be mailed out to the subscribers. Most newsletters cost a certain amount to participate in—usually barely enough to cover postage costs for the host.

Organized science fiction and fantasy fandom has been around since approximately the end of the second world war, if not before. It also largely subsisted through sundry fan newsletters through the post, and also broadened out through telephone calls and similar. If you want to know where the current convention scene had its origins, well, that’s where the main convention of the organized science fiction and fantasy fandoms, the Worldcon, is still going strong today.

Fandom has been on the internet since the internet was first invented back in the 1960s. While the first bulletin boards and mailing lists (email mailing lists, yeah, that was a big thing back in the 1980s and 1990s) were largely for programming related topics, they generally had a thick undercurrent of science fiction and fantasy references running through things, because a lot of programmers were fans of science fiction and fantasy novels.

The big places on the internet for fandom prior to the popularization of the world wide web were news groups, message boards, IRC channels, and email mailing lists.

Web sites and web servers for fandoms were often originally hosted by stealth—if the system originator for a particular company had a bit of spare capacity, they might sneak another machine into the data center and hook it up to the internet connection, provided the overall load on the system was low enough to go unnoticed. This is why a lot of the earlier sites were rather transient—steady web hosting in those early years was rather expensive. Often a fan site would pop up on an academic server (universities being the original focus of the internet) and be hosted there for as long as the site admin was still a student, and then lapse into neglect once the site admin graduated and couldn't find the necessary hosting facilities.

Actually, fandom existed long before Star Trek; in 1926, a science fiction magazine called **Amazing Stories** began to include a letters page that published the addresses of contributors to the magazine. This allowed for fans to contact each other directly, outside of magazines that only popped up every month or so.

In 1939 in New York City, fans organized the first ever convention—the World Science Fiction Convention.

From **Wikipedia**

Fandom is a subculture composed of fans characterized by a feeling of empathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest. Fans typically are interested in even inner details of the objects of their fandom and spend a significant portion of their time and energy involved with their interest, often as part of a social network with particular practices. This is what differentiates "fannish" (fandom-affiliated) fans from those with only a casual interest.

Note: The vignettes presented in Jon Swartz's column were written years ago and published in TNFF. They are being reprinted here for the benefit of those who were not club members at the time they were published. The information presented is not current, nor is the Fanlore altogether up to date.

OBSERVATIONS by Judy Carroll

New Year's resolution

Well, it's the end of the year—2018 is closing the door while 2019 is waiting at the gate to begin its tour of duty.

This time of year many people make New Years' resolutions. While some people hold true to this form as the only way to get oneself to make goals for the coming year, I have chosen a different approach. Since I dislike being told what to do (I go into rebellion mode even if I am telling myself what to do) I have come up with my alternative to the word *resolve*. I no longer say "I resolve". I now say to myself, "I suggest". By using "suggest" I am freeing myself from feeling trapped in a situation that will become extremely uncomfortable if I do not succeed.

So what has this got to do with the N3F? I am going to make a suggestion to the members.

"I suggest members become more involved in the activities of the N3F in 2019."

Now wasn't scary or confining, was it?

Did you feel the space to move around, to try it on and see if it fits?

Now, before you say anything, yes I have an N3F suggestion for myself.

"I suggest I manage my time in a more meaningful way so I can better attend to my N3F duties."



Letters to Origin

You send 'em, we'll print 'em...be fannish, as in the writings above

Robert Lichtman (robertlichtman@yahoo.com) : At the conclusion of your article on the N3F culled from Wikipedia, you write, "Accompanying this article in the Wikipedia is a link to the N3F website. As may be seen, the Wikipedia article on the N3F needs updating, which it is possible to do *via* a process whereby the readers add info." It's a little sad that once you follow that link there's very little in the way of history of the organization there, including a very spotty listing of the group's presidents in the 60s, 70s and 80s. And what is one to make of the list of scattered constitutions and bylaws of the club? Well, I do recall from having had a file of early issues of TNFF and its predecessor **Bonfire** pass through my hands when selling them on eBay that a favorite activity of the N3F in its early years was near-constant writing and re-writing of the constitution. That you have seven different sets of bylaws from more recent times perhaps indicates that this has continued to be a matter of discussion for members.

Does Jon Swartz know something we don't? In his review of the 1950 FAN DIRECTORY in Origin #9, he writes at the end of the first paragraph about its genesis, "All those involved in the Directory were members of the N3F at the time, and Ackerman remains a lifetime member today." I always thought—and the Wikipedia confirms—that Forry passed away on December 4, 2008, but *maybe he didn't!* Being a stfnal genius, perhaps 4SJ worked out a way to beat death. After all, the official motto of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS), of which he was a founding member, is "Death does not release you", to which LASFS member Ernie Wheatley added *circa* 1959-60, "even if you die". Leave it to Forry to take that literally and run with it.

Elsewhere in his review, Jon reports that Stan Woolston wrote in his preface to the Directory that "Janie Lamb of Ezekiel, Tennessee, would receive information slips from which the Directory was formed and keep them as a nucleus for a future larger list". There's a problem with this in that there is no such town in Tennessee. Janie's address was always Heiskell, Tennessee. I checked my copy of the Directory to confirm if this was a typo and, if so, whose typo it was—Stan's or Jon's—and in doing so I noticed with some surprise that Janie isn't listed anywhere in it—a surprising oversight.

And elsewhere in the issue, I enjoyed Gary Labowitz's letter, especially his research into editing some issues of **Kaymar Trader**—and wondered what place and relevance the two poems had with the purpose for the fanzine.

The poems, like art, are entertainment.

The N3F's website could use a lot of additional work done on it; perhaps some member should be put in charge of it and given that task, standing by for any research that is done that might make a more complete site possible.

For some reason Bob Tucker isn't listed as a lifetime member on our roster, and he is one of several lifetime members not listed, while there are some lifetime members still listed after their lifetimes were completed. The roster might could use some going over, but there seems to be no one who can go over it and check out oversights and repair them or account for them.

Charles Dexter Ward, a character from a Lovecraft title, is listed as a member, and I think this is not a real name and that his presence on the roster is a hoax. As he is a member, perhaps he will read this and account for this, correcting this statement if it is wrong.

Yes, I remember Janie as living in Heiskell from way back. Ezekiel is an unlikely name for a Tennessee town to have, or in fact for a town in any state to have—I can't imagine how the error occurred; perhaps I should have inquired with Jon before printing it, but I usually leave things like that as is and wait to see whether there will be any corrections of it rather than risking a conflict with what may be records kept elsewhere. The error isn't a recent one; Jon did that work some time back... and what he was quoting goes back further still. That error is strange enough that it resembles things that Charles Fort investigated.

I appreciate your writing to us and pointing out things you have noticed, and hope you will continue to do so. It's a lot of help in getting things in this bureau working.



WHEELS by John Polszli

I am lost and alone
in a labyrinth of roads
where tractor-trailers groan
speeding toward a gray
horizon,
fanged predators are
roaming through distant
mountains
in a world of wheels
bellowing.
Death is tolling

in moaning wheels rolling.
There is nowhere to run.



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